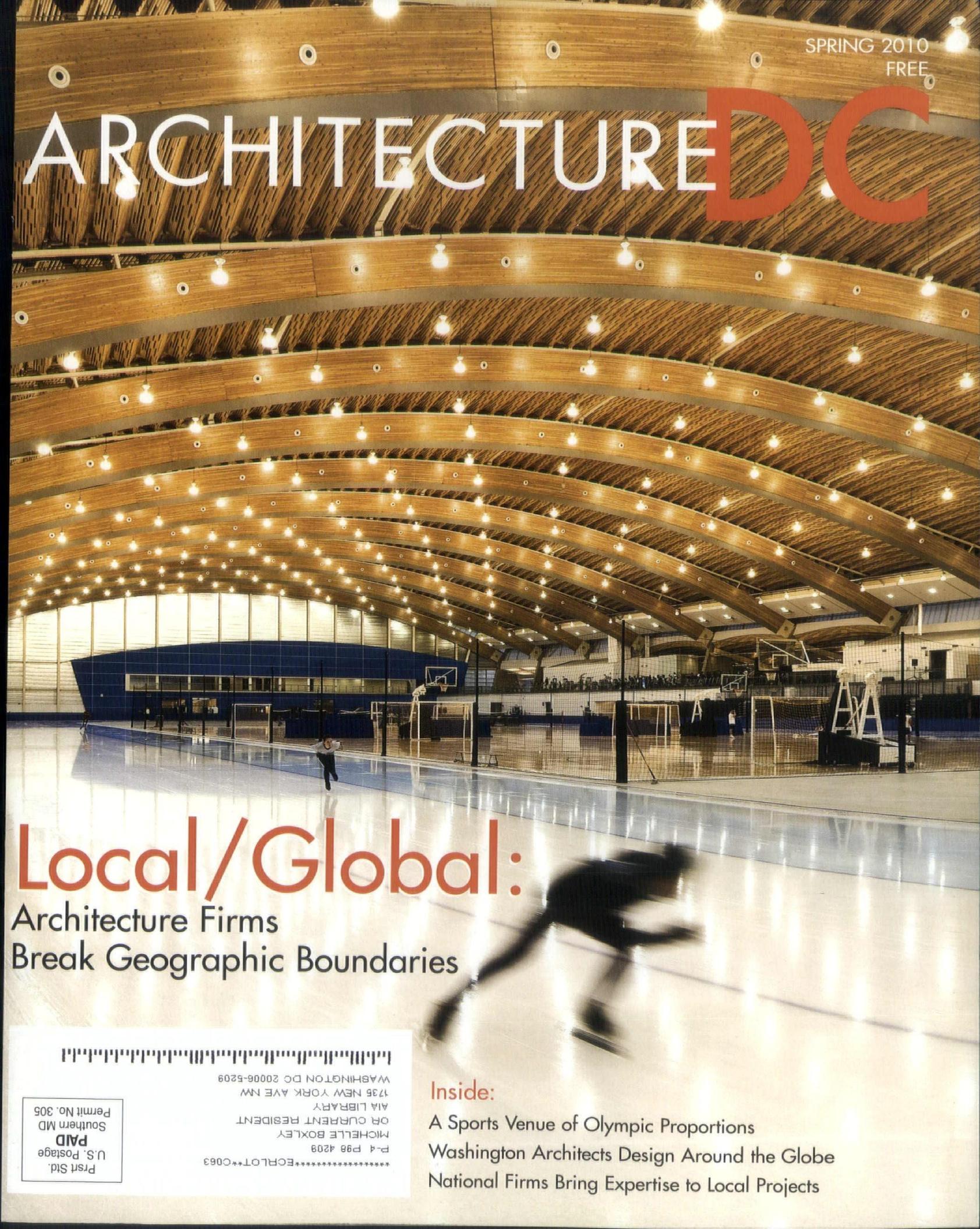


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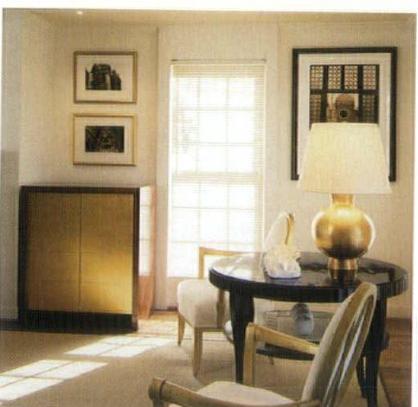
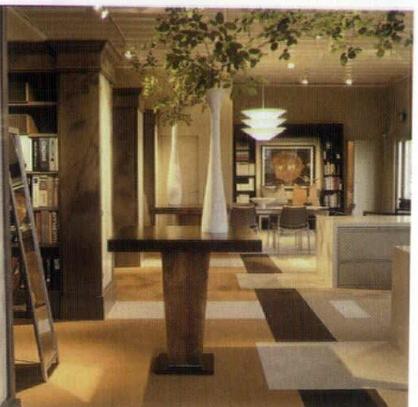
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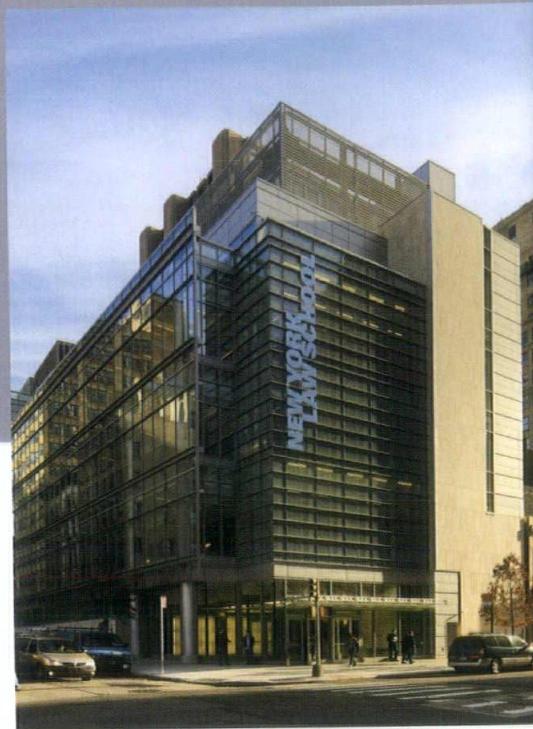


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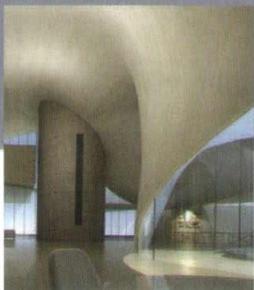
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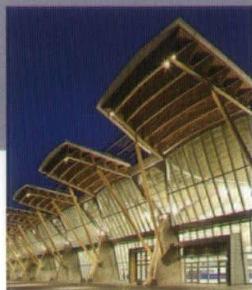
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ON THE COVER: Interior of the Richmond Olympic Oval, near Vancouver, Canada, by Cannon Design
Photo by Hubert Kang Photography / Courtesy of Cannon Design



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GOING GLOBAL



David Hamilton

Back in the '80s and '90s, the public's general image of Washington architects was pretty simple: the prevailing opinion was that, with some rock star exceptions, DC architects mostly designed center-hall colonials or federal government projects. It wasn't true then, and it certainly isn't true today. Washington firms design projects throughout the United States, indeed all over the world, of every type, in a variety of styles, and with a high degree of technical sophistication. **With this issue, we focus on one of the chief missions of this magazine: to show you the wide range of work being done by DC architects, much of it outside the Washington area.**

We begin by venturing far and wide, with a series of articles demonstrating the geographical breadth of local architectural practices. Martin Moeller explores work outside the US, including three diverse projects in Asia and a venue for the Vancouver Winter Olympics by Cannon Design. Ron O'Rourke reveals that DC is home to one of the premier equestrian design firms in the country—but you didn't know that—and Steve Dickens reports on several extraordinary buildings for higher education in New York City, Philadelphia, and Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Steve also covers a fascinating restoration of a historic opera house in, of all places, Meridian, Mississippi, by Martinez & Johnson.

Welcome!

We then return home to the Washington area with two articles about local projects by national firms with DC offices. Sarah Smith covers the newly opened Marriott Hall at the St. Albans School, by the venerable firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, along with three other educational and library facilities currently under construction or in design. Then Denise Liebowitz introduces you to a series of exciting projects that promise to enhance our city's public realm.

We'd be remiss in an issue about global practice if we didn't mention Haiti. We planned this issue in December, weeks before the devastating earthquake. Haiti is a difficult lesson in the need for enforced building codes that include seismic design standards. As the situation there begins to stabilize, there will be a lot of interest in temporary housing. But we hope it doesn't stop there. Equally important are other critical building types, including new schools. School building needs to happen in tandem with home construction if Haiti is to move forward.

The Chapter was grateful to be part of a building-industry wide fundraiser (organized by Khalid Itum of MOI among many others) for the American Red Cross that raised over \$180,000 for immediate relief. DC architects may well contribute to Haiti's immediate recovery in other ways in coming months. But we also look forward to being part of a longer-term commitment, through our national AIA component, also located here in DC, to help design a built environment that can help Haiti not just recover, but move ahead.

We hope you will enjoy our first global issue of **ArchitectureDC**.

*Mary Fitch, AICP, Hon. AIA
Publisher
mfitch@aiadc.com*

PS: Our editor, Martin Moeller, really took our global theme seriously. For our next issue, Martin will be telecommuting from Italy, where he'll be studying as a Visiting Scholar at the American Academy in Rome. Congratulations Martin!

Contributors

Abby Davis ("DetailsDC") is operating manager for AIA | DC.

Steven K. Dickens, AIA, LEED AP ("University Buildings" and "Prime Meridian Restoration") is a sole proprietor whose firm is called **Steve Dickens Architecture**.

Denise Liebowitz ("Public Amenities", formerly with the National Capital Planning Commission, is a frequent contributor to **ARCHITECTUREDC**.

G. Martin Moeller, Jr., Assoc. AIA ("Going East" and "Architecture Over Ice") is senior vice president and curator at the **National Building Museum**. He is the editor of **ARCHITECTUREDC**.

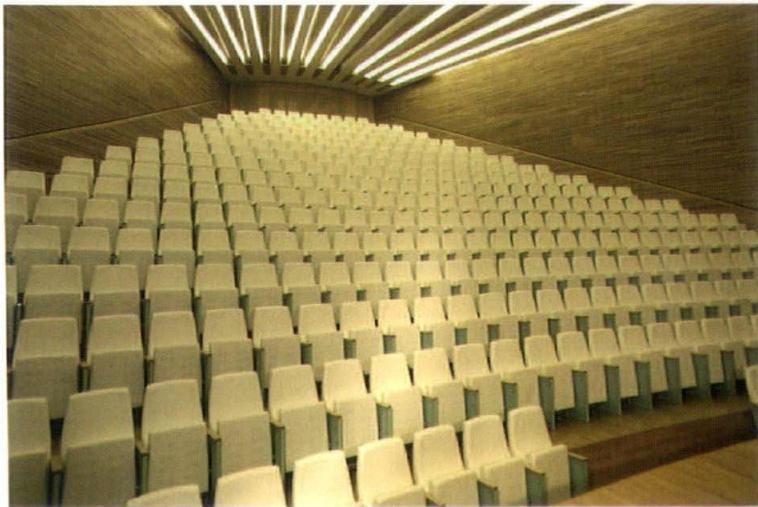
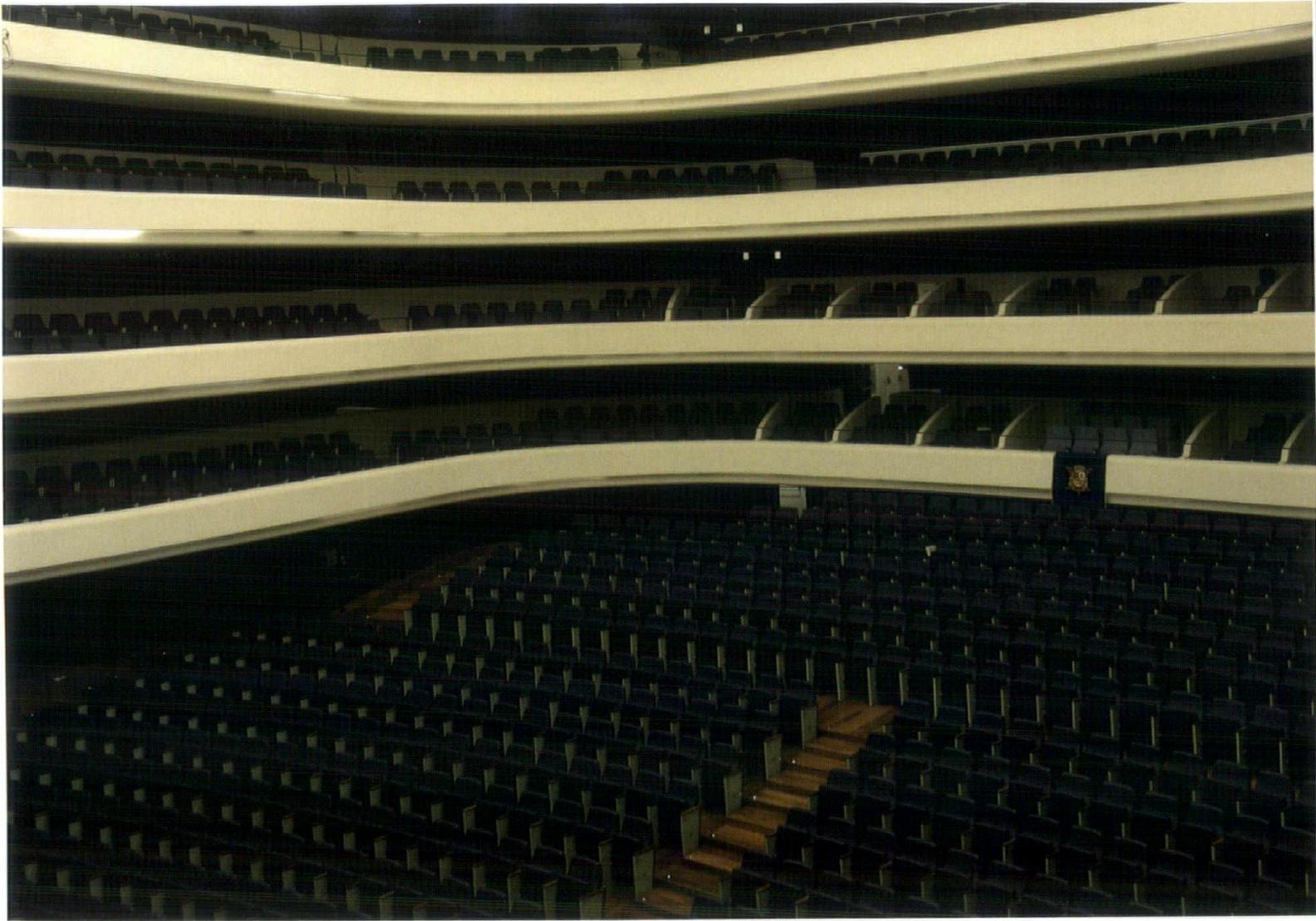
Ronald O'Rourke ("Fresh Air and Lots of Light") is a regular contributor to **ARCHITECTUREDC**.

Sarah Smith ("Places of Learning") is education and events manager for AIA | DC.

Corrections

The article about the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge Operator's Control House in the Winter 2009 issue incorrectly listed Parsons Transportation Group as a consulting partner on the project. Parsons was in fact the client.

Due to an error in information provided to **ARCHITECTUREDC**, the Montgomery College Cultural Arts Center was incorrectly identified as being located in Takoma Park, Maryland. It is in Silver Spring.



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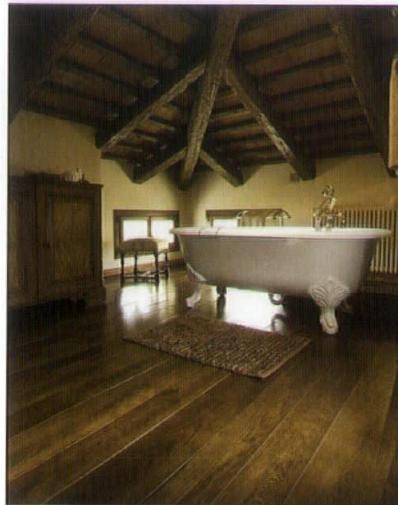
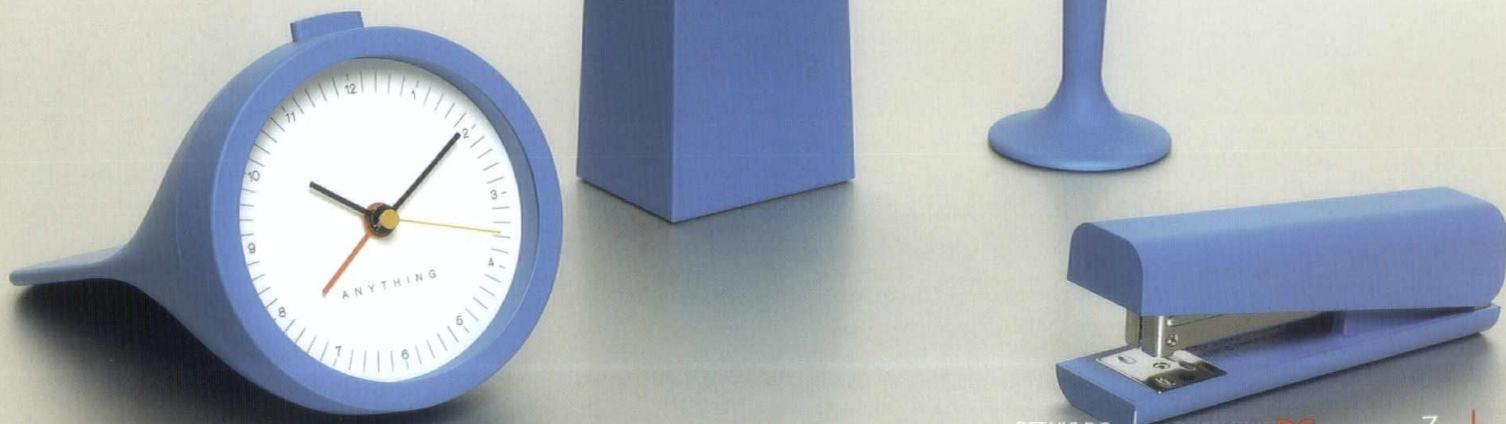
• Old Floor

by Abby Davis

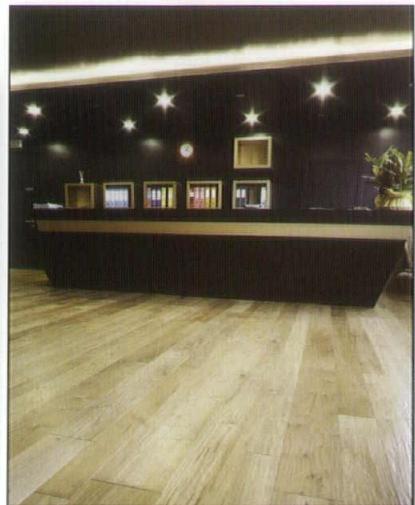
Need to add some color to your workspace in these winter months? **Anything Design** has new office products that will convince you that spring is coming! Alarm clocks, staplers, scissors, and tape dispensers are available in bold hues of orange, yellow, and the newest offering, bright blue (as well as your more standard basic black and white). You'll never lose your scissors again amid the clutter of a drawer—Anything Design's scissors come with their own handy little stand that will definitely pop among the monotony of papers and files. These office products hint at the trendiness of their British and Japanese provenance while still offering you the practicality and function you need for everyday use. Keep a look out for their upcoming stationery line as well! You can take a closer look on their website, www.anything-design.com, or to make an immediate purchase, visit **RCKNDY** at 1515 U Street, NW; tel: 202.332.5639. Open Monday and Wednesday through Saturday from 12 noon to 7 p.m., and on Sundays from 12 noon to 6 p.m. Closed Tuesdays.

Another way to usher in spring is to bring some Mediterranean style to your Washington-area home. Otello Ceron is extending his Old Floor company from Treviso, Italy, across the Atlantic and will be opening a showroom in DC. Using traditional techniques dating back more than 1200 years, the company will hand-craft a floor to your specifications, resulting in a look that will be exclusive to your home. While they work mainly in oak, you can also choose woods like walnut and teak. The wood is scraped by hand and varnished manually for a unique finish. Even better, these floors are perfect for an environmentally conscious customer who still wants a polished, high-quality effect.

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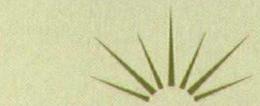


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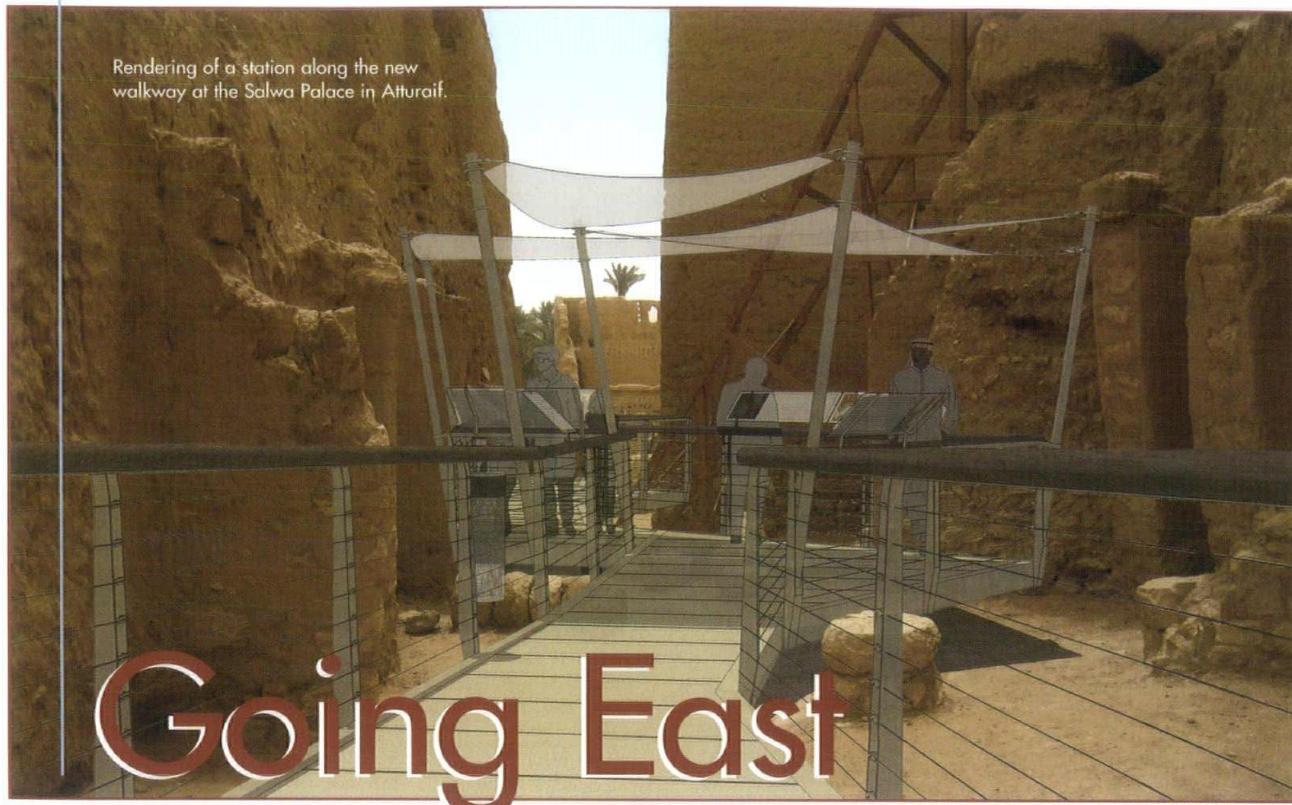


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Going East

Courtesy of Ayers Saint Gross Architects + Planners

Local Architecture Firms Build Their Portfolios in Asia

by G. Martin Moeller, Jr., Assoc. AIA

Washington-area architecture firms are not just practicing across the country—they are practicing around the world. Increasingly, thanks to advances in electronic communications—not to mention a growing appreciation for the talents and skills of many Washington-based architects—even some relatively small local firms are pursuing projects overseas, some of them in rather exotic places. This article presents several current projects by local architecture firms in the Middle East and India.

Birthplace of a Nation

On the outskirts of Riyadh, the contemporary capital of Saudi Arabia, lie the remains of the old city of Addiriyah. Home to the founder of the royal house of Saud, who formed a critical alliance with an influential religious leader there in 1744, Addiriyah is considered the birthplace of the Saudi state. The city's prominence was short-lived, however, as it was sacked by the Ottomans in 1818 and abandoned, leaving its characteristic mud-brick buildings in ruins.

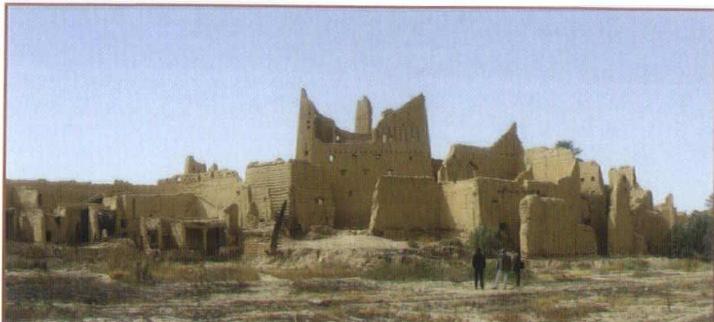
Over the past few decades, the Saudi government has been gradually restoring and rebuilding key structures at Addiriyah. In 2006, eager for more rapid progress, the government-owned Arriyadh [not to be confused with Addiriyah] Development Authority launched a search for a design and planning team to oversee the restoration and

enhancement of the site's most historic precinct, known as **Atturaif**. A team including the Washington office of **Ayers Saint Gross Architects + Planners** ultimately won the commission and began work in 2007.

"It's a huge undertaking and very important for the kingdom," said **William C. Skelsey, ASLA, LEED AP**, who serves as Ayers Saint Gross's principal in charge of the Atturaif project. "They have done many previous planning studies for this site, which is now a candidate for UNESCO World Heritage status. They wanted to make sure they had the right scope of work and the right team. They could not suffer another false start."

The charge to the design team was to create an engaging and educational experience for cultural tourists while protecting the fragile ruins. This broad mandate has entailed a wide spectrum of work, from faithful conservation of existing structures, to reconstruction of selected elements, to insertion of modern cultural facilities and tourist amenities. In addition to producing the overall urban design and landscape plan for Atturaif, Ayers Saint Gross is designing several specific structures, including a visitor reception center, a museum within the remains of the original royal palace, a souk (a traditional Arab market), and a footbridge spanning the wadi, or narrow valley, that runs through Addiriyah.

In designing the modern additions to the Atturaif precinct, the firm has assiduously avoided mimicry of the



Ruins of mud-brick structures at Atturaif.

Courtesy of Ayers Saint Gross Architects + Planners



Rendering of the Gallery of Abdullah Bin Saud at the Addiriyah Museum in the Salwa Palace.

Courtesy of Ayers Architects

Saint Gross + Planners

Project: The Historic City of Atturaif and the Addiriyah Museum at Salwa Palace

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réperages architectures; Paris, France

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InnoVision; Paris, France

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Mudbrick Conservation Consultants:

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historic architecture. "We want to be very clear about what is new," said Skelsey, citing UNESCO guidelines, "so that visitors are never confused." Those guidelines go well beyond concerns about visual clarity—they also dictate that all new "interventions" be completely removable, with no damage to the ancient remains, should some future custodians choose to restore the site to its previous condition. With this in mind, Ayers Saint Gross has conceived most of the new elements as simple, unobtrusive, glass-and-metal structures. Even the foundations are designed so that they will not penetrate the historic fabric of the ruins.

The most important structure in Atturaif is the Salwa Palace, which was the residence of three of the first four Saudi rulers and is now the centerpiece of the educational program for the overall site. "One major component of our plan is a meandering walkway, lifted off the ground on short legs, which also carries electrical power lines and a system for spraying a cooling mist to counteract the desert heat," explained Skelsey. "The walkway leads people on a very directed path through the palace. They will stop at various tented structures along the way for shade and to read interpretive panels, watch projected images on the walls of the ruins, etc. This meandering path then winds up at an enclosed gallery containing exhibits about the first Saudi state [and its rulers]."

Given the profound significance of the Atturaif site, coupled with the inherent difficulty of understanding the nuances of any foreign culture, the selection of an American firm as the lead architects and planners for this project might seem surprising. Yet several of the professionals at Ayers Saint Gross already had substantial experience working in the Middle East and other overseas locations, and the firm entered into the project with a clear sense of how to proceed.

"The first step was for us to become scholars on what happened in this place, the people who lived there, what their lives were like, and what they accomplished," said Skelsey. "Then there was a very long series of workshops with our client to understand their priorities and their mission. And, of course, we really got to know the site itself. Actually, it feels a lot like what I imagine the people who uncovered Pompeii must have been dealing with. You start at

an edge, then gradually work your way across the site, learning as you go."

Any architecture firm working on a distant project must accept additional risks and confront significant challenges, such as a lack of familiarity with the detailed site conditions. For the Atturaif project, as with others, Ayers Saint Gross was committed to addressing that particular problem head-on. "I pledge myself to having a wide variety of people involved in projects like this, and we also commit to having them see the place," said Skelsey. "Ten people from my firm have been in Saudi Arabia over the past few years. That includes several women, who, needless to say, found the experience of working in Saudi Arabia unique. Now there's a large group of people in our office who have a very intimate understanding of this place on the opposite side of the world. We can be here in Washington and talk about obscure corners of these remote buildings with a clear recollection of the details."

Skelsey seems to enjoy working in exotic locations. "Often times," he said, "you can travel far away and when you get there, it's shockingly familiar. But when you go to much of the Middle East, there's no doubt that you're somewhere else. I'm very conscious of the eye-opening effect that it has on us when we go there."

The Atturaif project, which is expected to be completed in mid-2012, has clearly fostered in Skelsey an appreciation for the mutual benefits of cultural exchange. "Our client and their team are among the most gracious people I've ever worked for," adding, "I feel that we've contributed to their own stated desire to evolve and adapt to other cultures."

Desert Island Deluxe

Late one Friday afternoon in the summer of 2008, the telephone rang in the Alexandria office of **David Jameson Architect**. The rest of the staff had already gone home, so Jameson answered the phone himself. "It was a scratchy call from a guy who said he was in Dubai," recalled Jameson. "He said they wanted to fly me to L.A.

Interior rendering of the Tent Villa prototype,
with one of the prefabricated containers visible at center left.



Courtesy of David Jameson Architect, Inc.

Exterior rendering of the Tent Villa prototype, showing the bamboo screen that surrounds three sides of the structure.



Courtesy of David Jameson Architect, Inc.

for a meeting, and they'd put me up at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel. I thought it was a college roommate of mine playing a joke on me."

It was not a joke. The caller was in fact a representative of a sheik, whose company, Meraas, was planning an ultra-luxurious residential development on a series of artificial islands off the coast of Dubai—islands that did not yet even exist. Meraas had been researching architects from around the world and had seen some of Jameson's work published. Jameson accepted the invitation to meet in Los Angeles, and soon thereafter, his firm was one of six in the US and Canada—along with a number of firms from other countries—hired to create prototypical villas for the planned development.

"They asked each of the participating firms to design three projects on land yet to be built," said Jameson. "It seemed like such an interesting exercise for us. So much of our work starts with site specificity, and here was the most unspecified site we had ever encountered. It's a zero-landscape project."

In the absence of the usual contextual clues that inform his design process, Jameson began pursuing two seemingly disparate lines of thought. The first idea was to incorporate organic, sculptural forms into the design of the villa, in marked contrast to prevailing trends in Dubai, which favored sleek geometries in high-end houses. Specifically, Jameson drew inspiration from the image of a "billowing tent in the desert," evoking the vernacular structures of a region that, until the mid-20th century, had very few permanent buildings. Based on this, he imagined the villa's principal form as a large but thin concrete shell, which would be built on site and would provide a sunscreen for workers as they constructed the remainder of the house beneath it.

The second idea related to that remainder beneath the concrete canopy. As it happened, Meraas had purchased a company that made modular components—specifically, bathroom units—for the huge Atlantis Dubai project. Why not, thought Jameson, have that same company build architectural "cartridges" to contain various living spaces, which could be transported to the site easily and installed as the owner desired? After all, the villa was intended as a prototype—using this combination of a custom, poured-in-place concrete shell and modular living units, the design could indeed be adapted to specific owners' wishes without compromising the fundamental architectural vision.

Ironically, for a house that was conceived for a site that does not yet exist, landscaping plays a significant role in the design solution. "The interesting thing," said Jameson, "is that even though you're buying an island, there's going to be another island really close to you. The developers could only guarantee a single-sided view. Hence our design includes this shroud of bamboo around three sides of the house. It's an architectural hedge that creates in-between space—outdoor space that is private but still permeable to breezes and so on. On the fourth side, the house unfolds to the primary vista."

While the **Tent Villa**, as it came to be known, is no larger than many other projects that Jameson has undertaken, the commission entailed dramatic changes for his practice. "This experience woke us up to the reality that some of our models and renderings, while fine for the work we had been doing, were not of the world-class quality that Meraas expected,"

admitted Jameson. "The project forced us to adopt new technologies that most firms our size wouldn't bother with, such as Revit [building information modeling software]. I probably would have not spent the money and made the jump otherwise, but now we have the ability to do work almost anywhere in the world. For a small firm based in Washington, that's impressive."

Jameson contends that even his local clients will benefit from the firm's experience working on the design for Dubai. "We are now able to take a tight-budget DC row house project and apply the lessons and technology that came out of the Tent Villa effort."

As for the status of the Meraas development, Jameson said that his contact there indicated very recently that, despite the ominous economic news coming from Dubai lately, the company still plans to proceed with the project once the financial climate improves.

A Healing Environment

Tata is a household name in India, shared by one of the country's most respected companies and the family that has run it for five generations. Founded in 1868, Tata Group is today a vast conglomerate that manufactures everything from table salt to cars, including the tiny Nano sedan, which sells for around US\$2,000. With annual revenues of more than US\$70 billion and some 357,000 employees worldwide, Tata and its subsidiaries have contributed significantly to India's recent economic growth.

Ratan Tata, the company's current chairman, is personally admired for both his modesty and his philanthropy. Among his recent charitable acts was the endowment of the Tata Medical Center in Kolkata (Calcutta). Now under construction, the center will provide state-of-the-art care for cancer patients in all stages of treatment.

Cannon Design received the commission for the Tata Medical Center—its first in India—after representatives of the firm made an exploratory visit to the country. They met the head of a successful engineering and project management firm, who in turn introduced them to representatives of Tata. Cannon has since been hired to design corporate projects directly for Tata, including the main manufacturing plant for the Nano and a 1.8-million-square-foot campus for Tata Consulting Services, one of the largest information technology outsourcing companies in the world.

"The drive for quality at Tata comes from the top," said **Mark K. Erdly, AIA**, a principal in Cannon's Arlington office who also oversees the firm's practice in India. "Ratan Tata [who holds an engineering degree from Cornell University] has been explicit in pushing for a timeless, understated quality in the buildings we're designing, which is great because that meshes with our philosophy. He didn't want something

Project: Tent Villa

Architects:

David Jameson Architect, Inc.; Alexandria, VA

Engineers:

Guy Nordenson and Associates Structural Engineers, LLP; New York,



Rendering of the Tata Medical Center in Kolkata, India.

Rendering by Cannon Design

flashy or trendy. I think that speaks to the humble, ethical nature of the Tata organization."

For the cancer center in Kolkata, Cannon designed a serene, elegant campus that looks more like a corporate or educational facility than a hospital. In contrast to the blocky massing and monotonous façades that are common in health care facilities, the Tata Center boasts a series of distinct wings surrounding landscaped courtyards, with artfully composed façades of stone and glass, punctuated by contrasting fins. A tall portico provides shade and serves as a welcoming gesture to the complex.

The renderings of the project and recent construction photographs depict a sophisticated, even sleek design, but as Erdly pointed out, achieving those qualities is not easy in India. "When you go to the project site, it is shocking to see the difference between Indian and western construction standards and methods," he said. "We are building a world-class facility, but doing it with a 19th-century labor force using early 20th-century technology."

The surprises for an American visitor to the construction site do not end with building methods and technology, however. "Believe it or not, the thousand people or so who are building this complex all live on site," noted Erdly. "The workers are living in temporary dorms. They get well fed, they get trained—but you have to really take off your western filter and be much more

open-minded about labor practices and other human factors when working in an emerging market."

Fascinating though these cultural differences are, they may not be the most astonishing aspect of this and other projects that Cannon is doing in India and elsewhere. Thanks to digital technology, a design team for a given project is now likely to comprise people scattered in offices around the world. "For the Tata project," said Erdly, "the design leadership was in Boston, the interiors team is in Mumbai and Toronto, signage and way-finding are being done here in DC, and I am the overall project leader, also here in DC."

"We don't really 'locate projects in specific offices any more,'" Erdly said. "We bring the right people to the project. If you don't have the right team, it's not going to work whether people are located together or not. And if you do have the right people, well then you're in good shape." 

Project: Tata Medical Center

Architects:

Cannon Design; Arlington, VA, and other locations

Architects and Engineers of Record:

Tata Consulting Engineers; India



Rendering of the portico at the Tata Medical Center.

Rendering by Cannon Design



Rendering of an interior corridor at the medical center.

Rendering by Cannon Design



Rendering by Cannon Design

An advertisement for PEDINI Custom Italian Kitchens. The top half of the image shows the PEDINI logo and the text "CUSTOM ITALIAN KITCHENS". Below the logo is a modern kitchen interior featuring dark wood cabinets, a white island with a built-in sink, and a large window. The bottom half of the image shows a close-up of a kitchen island with a dark wood finish and a built-in oven. The text "100% post-consumer recycled cabinets with no added formaldehyde" is at the bottom left, and the contact information "DOMAFORM DESIGN 3340 CADYS ALLEY NW WASHINGTON, DC 20007 TEL 202.640.1976 WWW.DOMAFORM.COM" is at the bottom right.

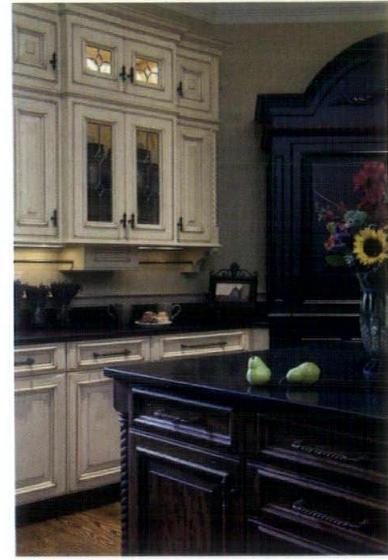
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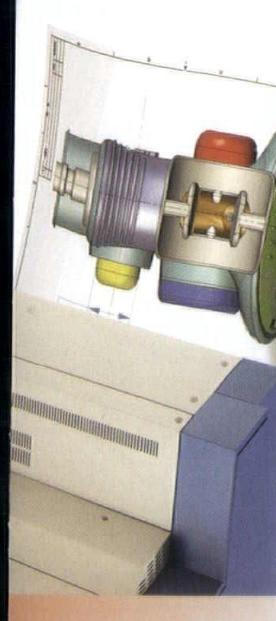
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Riverfront façade of the Richmond Olympic Oval.

Architecture over Ice:

Cannon Design Creates a Skating Venue of Olympic Proportions

by G. Martin Moeller, Jr., Assoc. AIA

The story of the Olympic Oval in the Vancouver suburb of Richmond, British Columbia, the venue for speedskating events at the 2010 Winter Olympic Games, begins at the end.

"It's an unusual building type," said **W. Kenneth Wiseman, AIA, MRAIC**, president of professional services at Cannon Design and the design principal for the project. "The Calgary games in 1988 were the first time an indoor speedskating oval was built, and most of the ovals that exist must be regarded as failures after the fact."

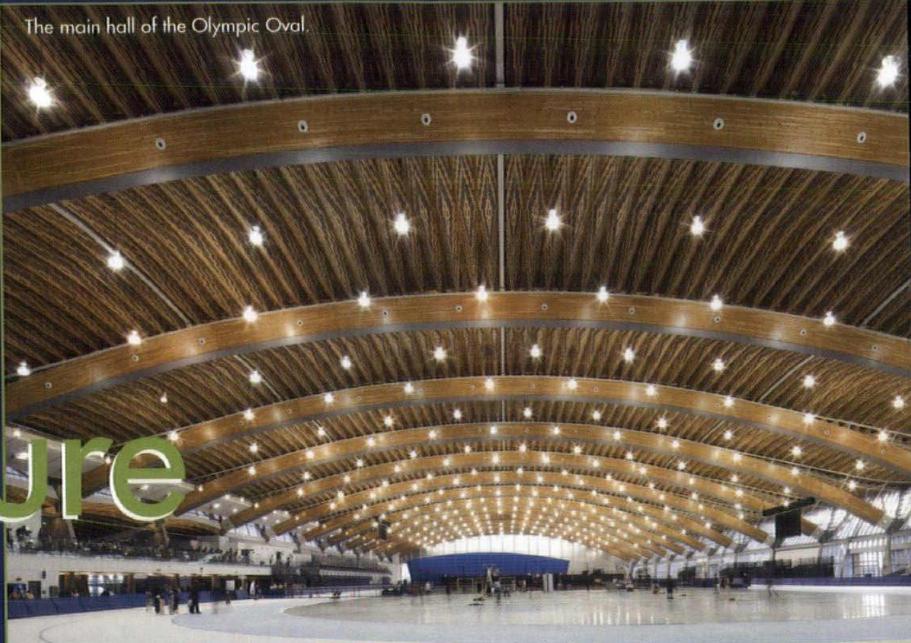
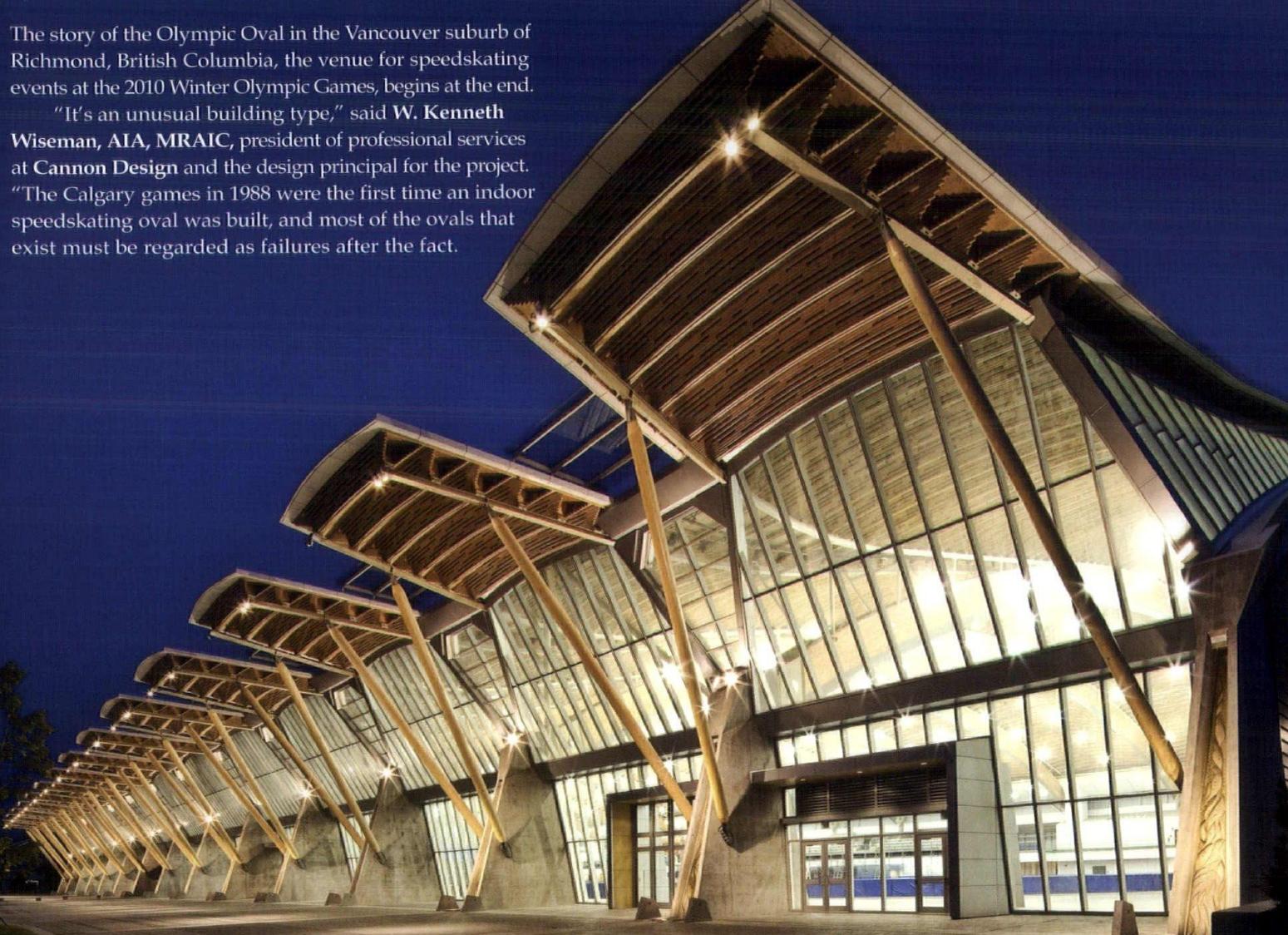


Photo by Derek Lepper Photography / Courtesy of Cannon Design





View of the primary structural members, which also accommodate ventilation and other services.

Photo by Hubert Kang Photography / Courtesy of Cannon Design

The one in Lillehammer [Norway, site of the 1994 Olympics] now sits empty 95% of the time. In Nagano [Japan, site of the 1998 Olympics], the government spends a lot of money to maintain a building that is seldom used."

Conscious of the ignominious fate of so many past Olympic venues, the design team at Cannon decided that its first priority was to ensure that the Richmond Oval would be a vibrant, well-used facility and a community asset long after the games' closing ceremony. "The first thing we designed for was the building's 'afterlife,'" said Wiseman. "Only then did we start to worry about the athletes and the games."

Toward that end, Cannon began by focusing on the building's relationship to its physical context. The site, running along the southern bank of the Fraser River, offered spectacular views toward the Vancouver International Airport just across the water and to the mountains beyond. The immediate setting, however, was much more mundane—a largely industrial zone with few urban amenities. Recognizing an opportunity, the architects conceived the new sports facility as the anchor for the area's redevelopment into a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood—a process that has already begun with several construction projects under way nearby. The site plan of the Olympic Oval creates an open plaza to the east and a park along the river to the north, providing the kinds of public spaces that are essential in successful urban design.

Cannon also conducted a broad market study of the Vancouver region and built a business plan around the area's long-term recreational needs. The building's "legacy configuration," as Wiseman calls its post-Olympics arrangement, will include two full-size hockey rinks, eight basketball courts, a large fitness center, a rowing tank, and a 200-meter running track—all indoors. "Working with the City of Richmond, which owns the building, we programmed all types of services for the facility," said Wiseman. "It serves the city on one level and the region as a whole on another."

But What About Those Olympics?

Satisfied that the facility would serve the long-term recreational needs of its community, the architects turned their attention to the challenge of creating an attractive, state-of-the-art speedskating venue for the 2010 Olympic Games.

The design of the Richmond Oval is rooted in the region's architectural vernacular, natural environment, and indigenous culture. "Vancouver is a town of porches," noted Wiseman. "It rains there a lot. That was the initial inspiration for the soaring overhangs on the north side of the building. Once we started to develop those forms, [we] noticed that the overhangs also reminded us of the tail feathers of a heron, which is native to the wetlands around our site. At the same time, the undulating roofline suggests the idea of rhythmic movement—the flow of the river, of a heron in flight, or even of a speedskater."

The structure, which accommodates upwards of 8,000 spectators during the games, is huge—"You could park three 747s side by side in [the main] room," noted Wiseman—but the finesse of the design brings it down to human scale. The abundant use of reclaimed wood, with its inherent grain patterns, lends visual texture and further links the building to the regional landscape, known for its beautiful forests. Meanwhile, sculptures carved into the concrete buttresses on the north façade add a finely detailed complement to the massive structure while portraying themes from native cultures, often called "First Nations" in Canada.

Any facility intended for elite athletic competition, of course, demands technical precision. "The design of the floor is an interesting story in itself," said Wiseman. "The ice on a speedskating oval is very thin—[a fraction] of an inch. In the Richmond Oval, they have the ability to adjust the temperature of the ice in the curve versus the straightaway. The ice is

End façade of the Richmond Olympic Oval.

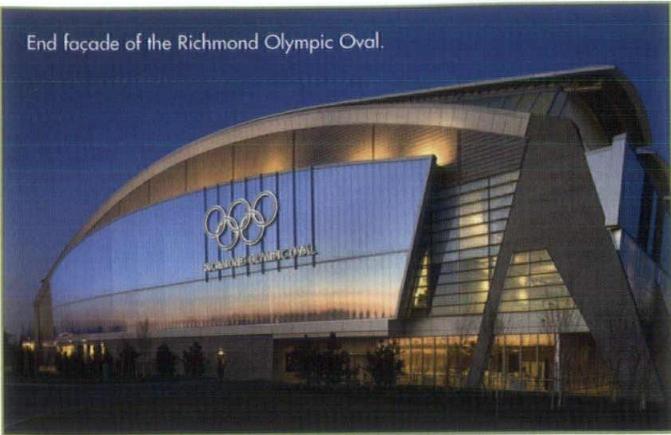


Photo by City of Richmond / Courtesy of Cannon Design

Project: Richmond Olympic Oval

Architects:

Cannon Design; Arlington, VA, and other offices

Security Consultants:

3si Risk Strategies, Inc.; Delta, BC

Cost Consultants:

BTY Group; Vancouver, BC

Civil/Marine Engineers:

Delcan; Burnaby, BC

Wildlife and Ecology Consultants:

ECL Envirowest Consultants Limited; Burnaby, BC

Special Structure Designers:

Fast + Epp; Vancouver, BC

Structural Engineers:

Glotman • Simpson Group of Companies; Vancouver, BC

Urban Designers:

Hotson Bakker Boniface Haden; Vancouver, BC

Wayfinding/Signage Designers:

Karo Group Inc.; Vancouver, BC

Code/Fire/Life Safety Consultants:

LMDG Building Code Consultants, Ltd.; Vancouver, BC

Building Envelope Technology Consultants:

Morrison Hershfield Limited; Vancouver, BC

Landscape Architects:

Phillips Farevaag Smallenberg; Vancouver, BC

Electrical/Mechanical Engineer:

Stantec Consulting Ltd.; Vancouver, BC

Refrigeration Engineers:

Sterling Engineering, Inc.; Calgary, Alberta

Geotechnical Engineers:

Thurber Engineering Ltd.; Vancouver, BC

Operations Consultants:

University of Calgary; Calgary, Alberta

softer at the curve, so skaters can dig in as they turn. And since the surface had to be dead flat in all directions—in a building that's one football field wide and two football fields long—we created a floating slab, independent of the rest of the structure. If part of the building settles even a tiny amount, they can adjust the floor surface to keep it perfectly even."

While a vast, enclosed sports facility would not seem an ideal candidate for green design, Wiseman emphasizes that sustainability was in fact an important consideration in the Olympic Oval. The enormous, arched beams that support the roof do double duty, in that they also carry mechanical ventilation and other systems, thus reducing raw material needs. "We had to go to the labor unions to get permission for the sheet metal workers to work in the factory that made the wood beams," noted Wiseman. Even the production of the ice surface was engineered to reduce its negative environmental impact. "Historically, ice has been made using ammonia or CFCs. We actually have a cutting edge system using brine saltwater. It's based on the same principle as using rock salt to make old-fashioned ice cream at home. Also, when making ice, of course, you dump heat. The heat that is created in that process is being re-used elsewhere in the building."

A Happy Beginning

If the story of the Richmond Olympic Oval begins at the end, it also ends at the beginning.

The facility opened on time and on budget in December 2008, more than a year *before* the Olympic Games for which it was ostensibly built. As of January 2010, more than 300,000 people had already participated in the center's health and wellness programs, celebratory activities, and spectator sporting events. According to the venue's website, "The Oval has been the most open and accessible Olympic venue prior to the Games in history." The City of Richmond is optimistic that in this case, a strong warm-up will prove to be a prologue to peak performance in the main event and beyond. ☀

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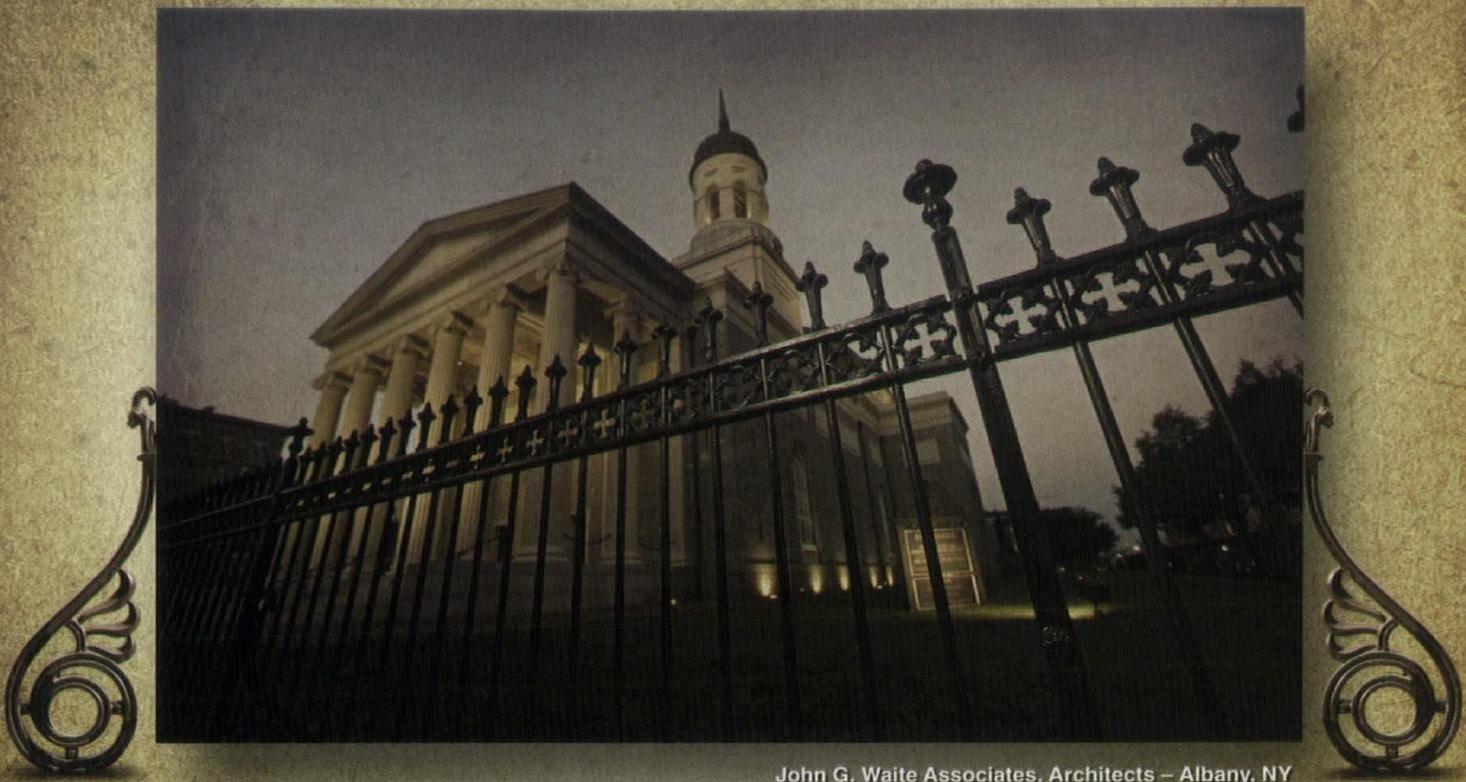
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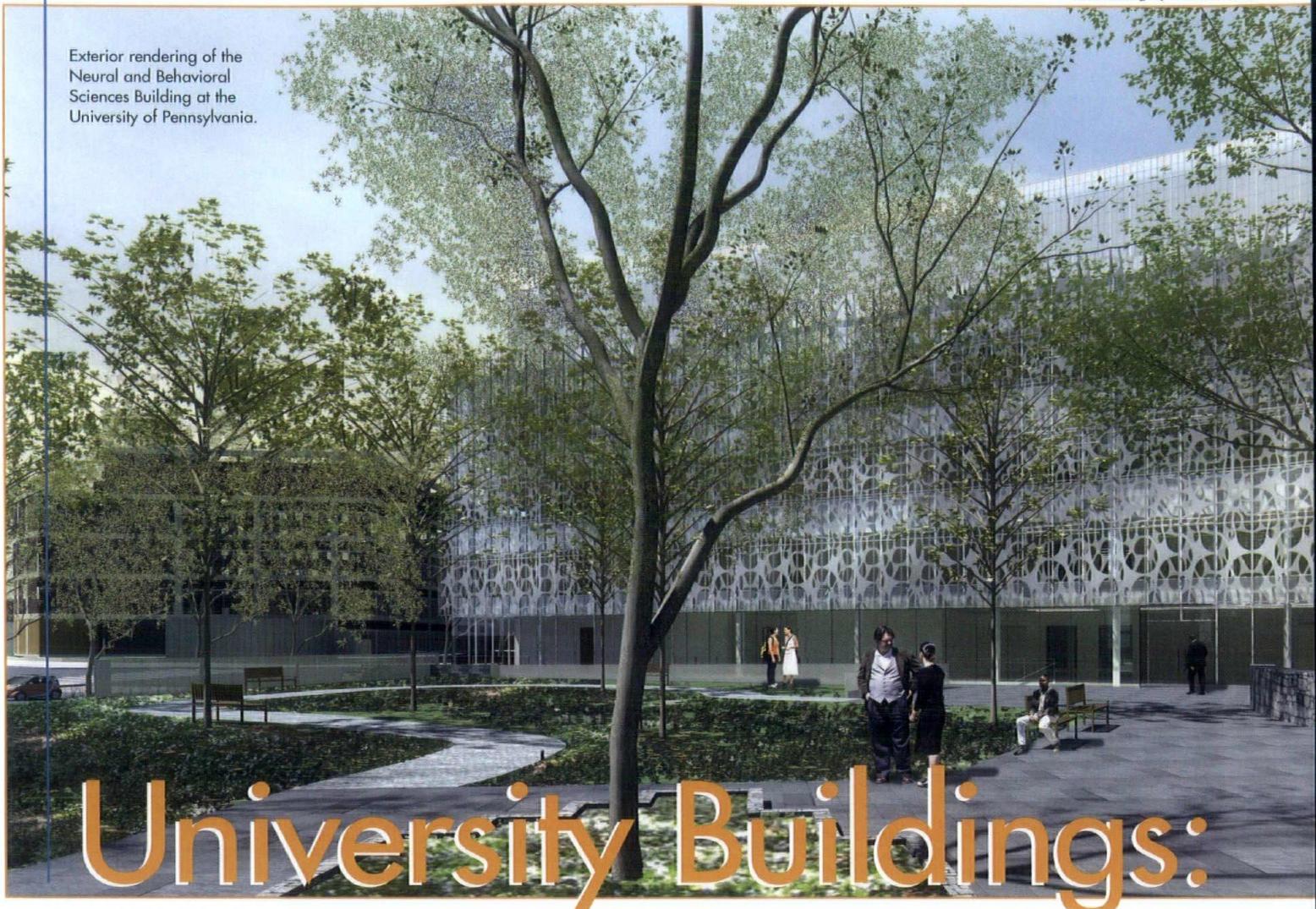
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Exterior rendering of the Neural and Behavioral Sciences Building at the University of Pennsylvania.



University Buildings:

Goodbye Ivory Tower by Steven K. Dickens, AIA

The apple, it would seem, has become the paradigm to which higher education now aspires. Not Apple the computer and iPod company (although its products and philosophy are part and parcel of this trend), but rather Newton's apple, as perhaps the most famous example of a random event leading to a "Eureka!" moment. The traditional paradigm of the "ivory tower" revolved around the romantic notion of the intellectual, literally or figuratively peering out from a tower at the world far below and drawing conclusions therefrom. The Newtonian apple, in contrast, suggests a model in which the world comes to the intellectual, leading to unpredictable interactions, now seen as the font of innovation and new ideas. The detached intellectual has been replaced, at least in part, by regular people; humanity has assumed the role of collective scholar.

Model Behavior

The as-yet unbuilt **Neural and Behavioral Sciences Building (NBS)** at the University of Pennsylvania, designed by the Washington office of **SmithGroup**, illustrates this shift in thinking. The building is a relatively straightforward rectangular box, oriented east-west for optimal solar control, and expressed as three interlocking elements:

Kalwall translucent panels clad the faculty offices and the penthouse; a copper-paneled volume houses the laboratories; and while both of these areas have ribbons of clear windows, the third element, the "interaction" zone, is distinguished by floor-to-ceiling glass and the building's signature element, a lacy sunscreen which filters views and controls solar gain.

The sunscreen is a marvelous architectural manifestation of the NBS's purpose, the "study of the massive interconnectedness and variation of neural processes and biological forms," to use the words of SmithGroup principal **Sven Shockley, AIA**. Additionally, it is a custom creation that, in a very direct way, illustrates the potential of computers in design and manufacturing. The sinuous lines of the sunscreen—an obvious reference to illustrations of neural networks—are created by various rotations over two overlapping forms, one solid and the other perforated, creating a great deal of variation. Although it could have been made without computers, the digital revolution makes the whole process quite easy, not to mention economical, as the resultant design can be transferred directly to manufacturers' computers for fabrication.

The "interaction" zone is the heart of the building, serving as the circulation between offices and laboratories. The accidental



Rendering of the end of the Neural and Behavioral Sciences Building with Kalwall panels.

Rendering by SmithGroup

interactions that will naturally occur in these areas are considered crucial, so the space is not only given great architectural importance, but is thoughtfully designed to promote use. For example, typically fire stairs are unfriendly, enclosed elements that people avoid, but SmithGroup created a beautiful, open stair of terrazzo with glass railings as a compositional anchor at the southwest corner of the interaction zone. It meets building code requirements thanks to two sliding fire doors (which have smaller, standard doors within), which automatically close if the fire alarm system is set off. A less elaborate version of the same concept makes the other fire stair, within the faculty office wing, much more appealing, in both cases inviting random interactions.

Last year, the NBS won an Unbuilt Architecture award from the Washington Chapter/AIA, which was announced the same day as a crucial Penn Design Review Committee session. The timing couldn't have been better, notes SmithGroup associate **Dayton Schroeter, AIA**: SmithGroup's team reported the award to the

Project: University of Pennsylvania, Neural and Behavioral Sciences Building

Architects:

SmithGroup; Washington, DC

Landscape Architect:

Christopher Allen Landscape Architecture & Planning; Philadelphia, PA

university *after* the committee had weighed the project's architectural merits against its cost. The award validated the committee's decision to give the project the green light.

A Scientific Experiment

In Dickinson College's **Stuart Hall and James Hall**, by the DC office of **Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Architects (ZGF)**, the word "collaboration" is preferred over "interaction," but the concept is identical. Dickinson College is one of the nation's oldest independent liberal arts colleges. Since its origins in the 19th century, interdisciplinary study and collaboration have been central academic goals. The new building houses a mixture of learning and research spaces for biology, biochemistry, molecular biology, chemistry, neuroscience, and psychology. The various uses and disciplines are purposely mixed up in the facility.

Dickinson, located in classic small-town Carlisle, Pennsylvania, has a campus in which most buildings are relatively small, with pitched slate roofs and limestone walls. Some of the more recent campus buildings, including Tome Hall, to which the ZGF project connects, represent a modern take on the historic context. But James Hall and Stuart Hall take this to an entirely new level, visually connecting the college to 21st-century learning models.



Above and below: Exterior views of Stuart Hall and James Hall.

Photo by Chuck Choi Architectural Photography

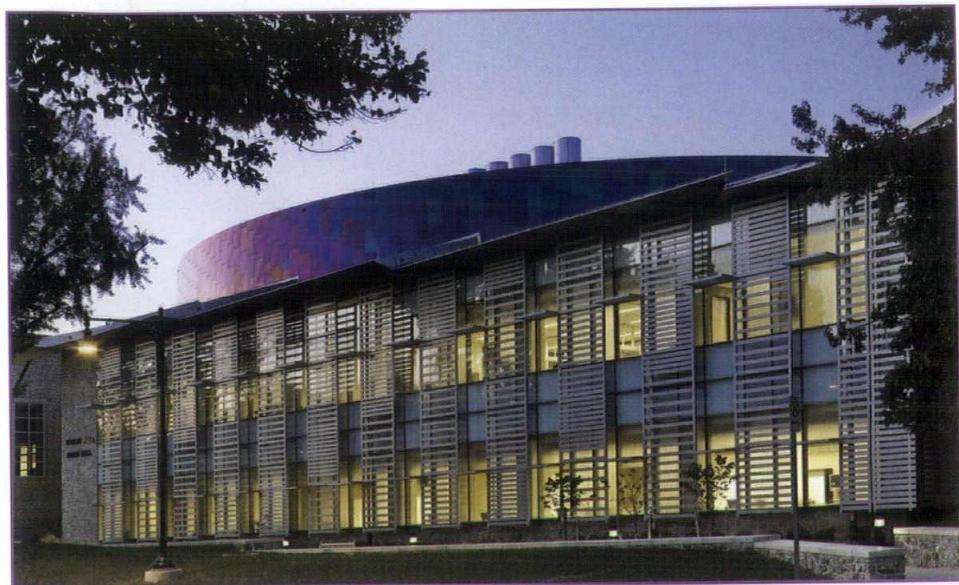


Photo by Chuck Choi Architectural Photography



A study lounge within the new building.

Photo by Chuck Choi Architectural Photography

The new building uses the same limestone, providing a fundamental degree of continuity. The sloping roofs have been substantially reinterpreted, however, into a radiating sawtooth configuration (ZGF calls them "petals"). The most surprising update involves the slate shingles, which here have morphed into iridescent stainless steel wall panels. These panels—a greenish metallic color in soft, neutral light—take on dramatically different hues depending on the sun, time of day, and angle of view, lending animation to the building—a metaphor, one assumes, for the dynamic learning environment within.

Inside, the main organizational device is a generous curving "street" with a variety of lounge and study areas, platforms that could become impromptu stages, stairs and elevators, and in some areas, second-floor balconies. This street connects the two wings (one named James Hall, the other Stuart), plus loading docks, the pre-existing Tome Hall, and a third wing planned for the future. The bars fan out from the curved "street," maintaining orientations close enough to east-west for optimal solar control and daylighting.

The various classrooms, laboratories, and offices are pleasant, functional, and (thanks to generous daylighting) bright spaces, but the stars of the interior are the many informal lounge/meeting/study spaces. These spaces are visually separated from adjacent circulation zones by a change from terrazzo to carpet flooring and by semi-open wood screen walls. Glazing connects the spaces to the outdoors and to adjacent learning spaces or offices. The furnishings are easily reconfigured, and blackboards and pinup space are provided for spontaneous scribblings. All of this effort

Project: Dickinson College, Stuart Hall and James Hall

Architects and Interior Designers:

ZGF Architects LLP; Washington, DC

Mechanical/Electrical/Plumbing Engineers:

Bard, Rao + Athanas Consulting Engineers, LLC

Laboratory Planners:

Research Facilities Design

Structural Engineers:

LeMessurier Consultants

Civil Engineers:

Brehm-Lebo Engineering, Inc.

Construction Managers:

Reynolds Construction Management

Landscape Architects:

EDAW (now AECOM)

Lighting Designers:

Francis Krahe & Associates, Inc.

Acoustics/Vibration/Audio-Visual Consultants:

Shen Milsom & Wilke

Specifications Consultants:

Heller & Metzger, PC



New York Law School.

Photo © Jeff Goldberg / Esto

is aimed at facilitating and capitalizing on the accidental encounter or insight.

Almost every space has windows looking to other spaces—either directly or across a landscaped courtyard. In a simple, direct way, this fosters awareness of the myriad academic pursuits under way in the complex, inviting interdisciplinary insights and collaborations.

James Hall and Stuart Hall were designed for LEED Silver certification, but ended up receiving LEED Gold. “We took an evenhanded approach to sustainability,” comments **Rich Hubracker, LEED AP**, ZGF’s sustainability coordinator, noting that the efforts run the gamut. A quotidian example is a concealed break in the limestone walls where they penetrate from inside to outside, to prevent thermal bridging. A less common example is the enthalpy wheel, which is an attachment to the main air handler unit that dramatically increases HVAC efficiency by transferring both heat and humidity between exhaust air and incoming fresh air.

The faculty’s goal was to make research public and watchable, subverting the idea of the genius toiling away in a laboratory hidden

from view. In James Hall and Stuart Hall, the science has become visible to all users, thus giving Dickinson College a jolt of the future.

Legal Transparency

New York Law School (NYLS) has never been a standard-issue legal institution. It is an independent law college (not, as is often assumed, part of New York University) founded in 1880 as a splinter from Columbia University Law School, for the purpose of providing educational opportunities for minorities and women. Since the early 20th century, it has been located in Lower Manhattan, in the area now known as Tribeca. Its motto is “Learn law, take action,” and in this case, action is the promotion of social justice via legal activism, not the earning of impressive salaries.

After winning the commission to design a new facility for NYLS, the Washington office of **SmithGroup** devised a variety of schemes that didn’t come to fruition: the school couldn’t afford a new building. Then, unexpectedly, Tribeca’s popularity

The purposefully corporate-looking lobby of the New York Law School.



Photo © Jeff Goldberg / Esto

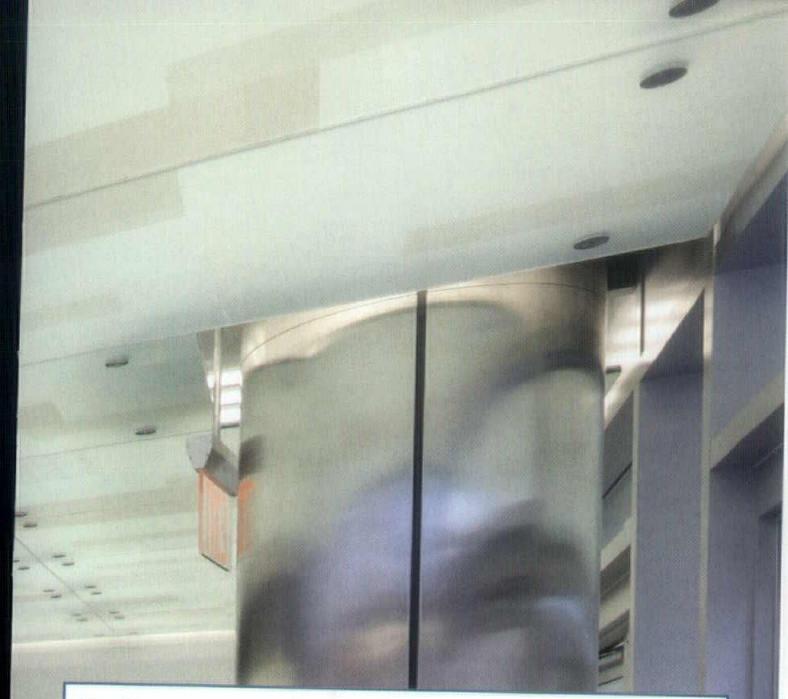
as a residential neighborhood for the very wealthy soared. NYLS, which had accumulated a number of properties over the decades, found that it could finance an entirely new building adjacent to its existing ones, simply by selling off one building. (That structure, immediately to the east of the new NYLS building, was torn down to make way for a very tall, ultra-luxury condo tower designed by Herzog & de Meuron. The foundations were constructed, but the tower is on hold.) The school jumped at the opportunity to create a new identity.

With some 1,500 students, NYLS is a large law school. The new building has roughly 200,000 square feet on nine floors, connecting to 150,000 square feet of existing space in adjacent buildings. One odd characteristic of the site is that it came with a deed restriction mandating a maximum height above street level of five stories. Fortunately, the deed set a generous maximum height of 95 feet, allowing for the very tall stories that are useful to an academic institution, but to fill the programmatic requirements it was still necessary to dig down four stories. This was accomplished via "top-down" construction, in which, incredible as it seems, each basement floor was actually excavated and constructed under and after the one above it. These basement levels primarily house an auditorium, gallery, and library stack space.

A big break from the norms of law school design was the prioritization of student spaces over faculty areas. Student spaces are front and center—literally and figuratively. The two street facades are almost entirely given to lounges, semi-private meeting areas, food service areas, and the like, with classrooms and other program spaces inboard. The entire penthouse (fifth) floor consists of student spaces, ranging from a large, open dining area along the exterior window wall, to quieter informal study/lounge areas in the middle of the building (separated from the dining area by glass, and therefore sharing light and views), to group study rooms along the inside party wall.

Notwithstanding the breaks with tradition in programming and planning, the interior design of the building is reminiscent of a modern, high-end law firm's offices. Oceans of crisp white surfaces, with carefully composed reveals and joints, are offset by warm wood walls, metal accents, and, in less public areas, grey carpet. Panes of clear and etched glass modulate light and views. Chic lounge furniture provides splashes of intense red and orange, and the lighting is expertly controlled and composed.

Thanks to the transparency of the facades, the entire city shares these beautiful spaces, especially at night, when the building truly becomes a lantern. NYLS's community-minded identity is unmistakable.



Project: New York Law School

Architects:

SmithGroup; Washington, DC

Associate Architects:

BKSK Architects; New York, NY

Project Managers:

VVA; New York, NY

Mechanical/Electrical/Plumbing Engineers:

Jaros Baum and Bolles; New York, NY

Foundation & Geotechnical Engineers:

Mueser Rutledge Consulting Engineers; New York, NY

Acoustic/AV Technology Consultants:

Cerami & Associates, Inc.; New York, NY

Lighting Design:

SmithGroup; Detroit, MI

Curtainwall Consultants:

Raymond Wilson & Associates, Ltd.; Hamilton, ON, Canada

Signage Designers:

Two Twelve Associates; New York, NY

Epilogue

It is worth noting that sustainable or "green" design has become so standard for university buildings that, in two of the interviews for this article, the architectural teams didn't even think to mention it until asked. Yet all three projects met high standards in this regard. Admittedly, universities are among the most logical clients for sustainability—not only do they have a strong interest in controlling life-cycle costs, but they are also centers of innovation and often advocates for social progress. Moreover, young people in general and students in particular are interested in, and demand, concerted action to reverse environmental degradation.

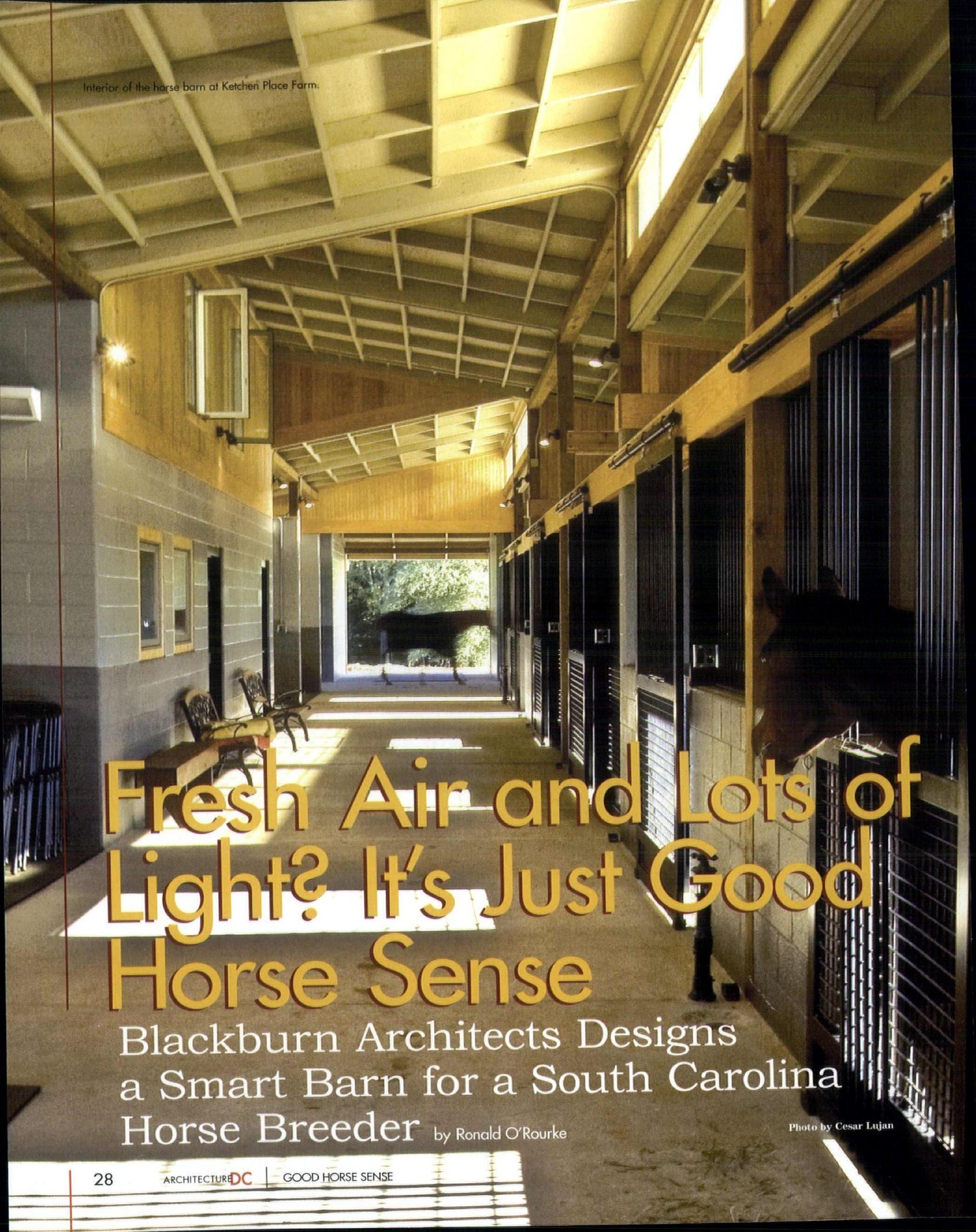
Nor should one overlook the fact that university buildings tend to have above-average construction budgets, enabling them to absorb higher up-front costs, but for this writer, the somewhat blasé attitude of these design teams is cause for optimism. Green has gone mainstream, at least in one corner of the architectural profession. 



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Interior of the horse barn at Ketchen Place Farm.



Fresh Air and Lots of Light? It's Just Good Horse Sense

Blackburn Architects Designs
a Smart Barn for a South Carolina
Horse Breeder

by Ronald O'Rourke

Photo by Cesar Lujan

Horses in their stalls at Ketchen Place Farm.



Photo by Cesar Lujan

Downtown DC may not look much like horse country, but it's home to one of the nation's leading architectural firms for equestrian facilities—**Blackburn Architects, PC**, headed by principal **John Blackburn, AIA**. Over the last 27 years, Blackburn Architects has designed more than 150 equestrian facilities for clients across the United States and Canada. The firm also designs residential projects, commercial interiors, and historic renovation projects, and maintains a satellite office in San Francisco to better serve its West Coast clients.

One of Blackburn's most recent projects is a new barn for Ketchen Place Farm, a breeder of dressage horses located on a 50-acre site in Rock Hill, South Carolina. The builder for the project was Advanced Equine Construction of Corbin, Kentucky, which has built barns and other equestrian facilities for 26 years. In addition to the new barn, Blackburn's work at Ketchen Place Farm includes a separate building with a four-bay garage and a two-bedroom residence above, a run-in shed, redesigned and improved roads, fencing, and a new entrance for the site. All these elements conform to a new site master plan that Blackburn first developed for the clients.

The design of equestrian facilities—a category that includes barns, stables, arenas, and training facilities, among other structures—is a specialized branch of architecture that requires an intimate knowledge of both the safety and health needs of horses and the functional needs of their business or recreational owners. Designers must pay attention to a lot of details, many quite small (such as the placement of light fixtures and switches), which, if handled improperly, could pose a risk to horse safety or health. As a result, the sophistication of a well-designed equestrian barn may not be apparent at first glance to those who don't work closely with horses. But it's much

appreciated by the clients, for whom getting those details right can be critical to business success.

"Because a horse is intended to live in nature, as soon as you bring a horse into a paddock—and more, into a barn—you're asking for trouble unless the design responds to the horses' health and safety needs," Blackburn said in an e-mail. "That's why we design all our barns to be natural—naturally ventilated, naturally lit, and designed so the conditions within the barn balance those of the natural environment. Regarding those concerns and other more-detailed ones, there are hundreds if not thousands of things one needs to know or be aware of regarding the behavior, habits, and natural instincts of horses when designing a shelter for them."

"My primary concern is always to plan the site and design the building to respond to protecting the health and safety of the horse," he added. "While we must balance the demands of the site, the goals of the owner, and the budget, the health and safety of the horse is always our biggest priority overall."

The barn at Ketchen Place Farm is a U-shaped shed row structure with 20 regular stalls, two larger foaling stalls, five washing and grooming stalls, plus a tack room, an office, a storage shed, and a second-floor studio apartment for watching over foals. The courtyard created by the barns' three sides, Blackburn said, "allows the client a contained area to show horses for sale, provides a protected area for people to gather, and allows space for the client to practice dressage."

Traditional barns are often built with a loft over the stables for hay storage—an arrangement that reduces opportunities for bringing in natural light and creates a fire risk. Departing from this scheme, the barn at Ketchen Place Farm eliminates the overhead loft in favor of a



A daytime view reveals the elegant simplicity of the horse barn.

Photo by Cesar Lujan

continuous ridge skylight with venting that runs the length of the structure. In addition to admitting ample light, the arrangement creates a vertical convection current in which warm air vents out the top, drawing in cooler, fresh air from the outside.

"A shed row barn is inherently open and is easily ventilated and lit naturally," Blackburn said. "While the relative openness of this barn would provide overwhelming ventilation in a cooler climate, it's perfectly suited to its warm South Carolina climate." The vertical air circulation scheme also avoids the need for horizontal ventilation running through the length of the building—an arrangement that can transmit pathogens from one horse to another.

"The budget for the site—about \$750,000—was a bit of a challenge, as we wanted to provide all the elements of the clients' program while providing a quality design," Blackburn said. "We wanted the design to respond to the site and the vernacular [architecture] of this area in South Carolina."

"Ketchen Place Farm sits in a rather rural area and we wanted to design the farm using materials that reflect the environment," he elaborated. "We didn't want to dress the barn up and make it something it's not. I had recently read about [the architect] Samuel Mockbee's Rural Studio and was inspired by his philosophy of design, its connection to the rural south, the use of local materials, and how it could fit into a tight or lower budget."

As a result, he said, "concrete block, wood framing, and corrugated metal roofing are the three primary materials used for the project. We were able to efficiently and cost-effectively design the barn in an almost modular fashion, creating a 12-[foot]-by-12-[foot] grid pattern to minimize the use of materials and maximize the space."

Although green, or sustainable, design is a relatively new area of emphasis for some architects, Blackburn's firm has been practicing it for more than 20 years. The LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification system for green design

administered by the U.S. Green Building Council doesn't include standards for agricultural buildings, but the staff at Blackburn Architects includes LEED-accredited equestrian designers, and the firm incorporates LEED principles into its equestrian projects.

"Virtually all the materials used were local and/or manufactured within 500 miles of the site," Blackburn said. "[Providing] natural light to all areas reduces the need for electric power. This barn has a very low electrical demand, and electric lights aren't required during the day. There's very little heating [required] in this location, and though air conditioning is prevalent in the area, there's none required in this barn. The only climate-controlled space is the small apartment on the upper level, and even that uses natural light to light the space."

"Though no gray water collection system has been installed," he added, "the sloping shed roofs are designed so rainwater collection could be easily installed if desired. All surface drainage is collected on site and permitted to drain back into the soil. The building itself has a small footprint since it's relatively low to the ground and works with the natural contours of the site."

"Buildings," Blackburn says on his firm's web site, "can be designed to reflect the architectural vernacular of a region, yet remain effectively 'green' without sacrificing aesthetic beauty." The owners of Ketchen Place Farm would agree. ☐

Project: Ketchen Place Farm

Architects:

Blackburn Architects, PC; Washington, DC

Engineers:

Tate, Shahbaz & Associates, PC

Contractors:

Advanced Construction of Kentucky

Stall Systems Consultants:

Lucas Equine

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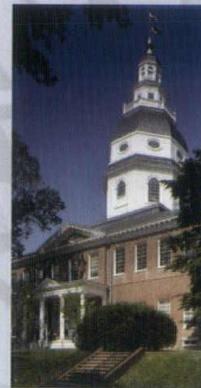
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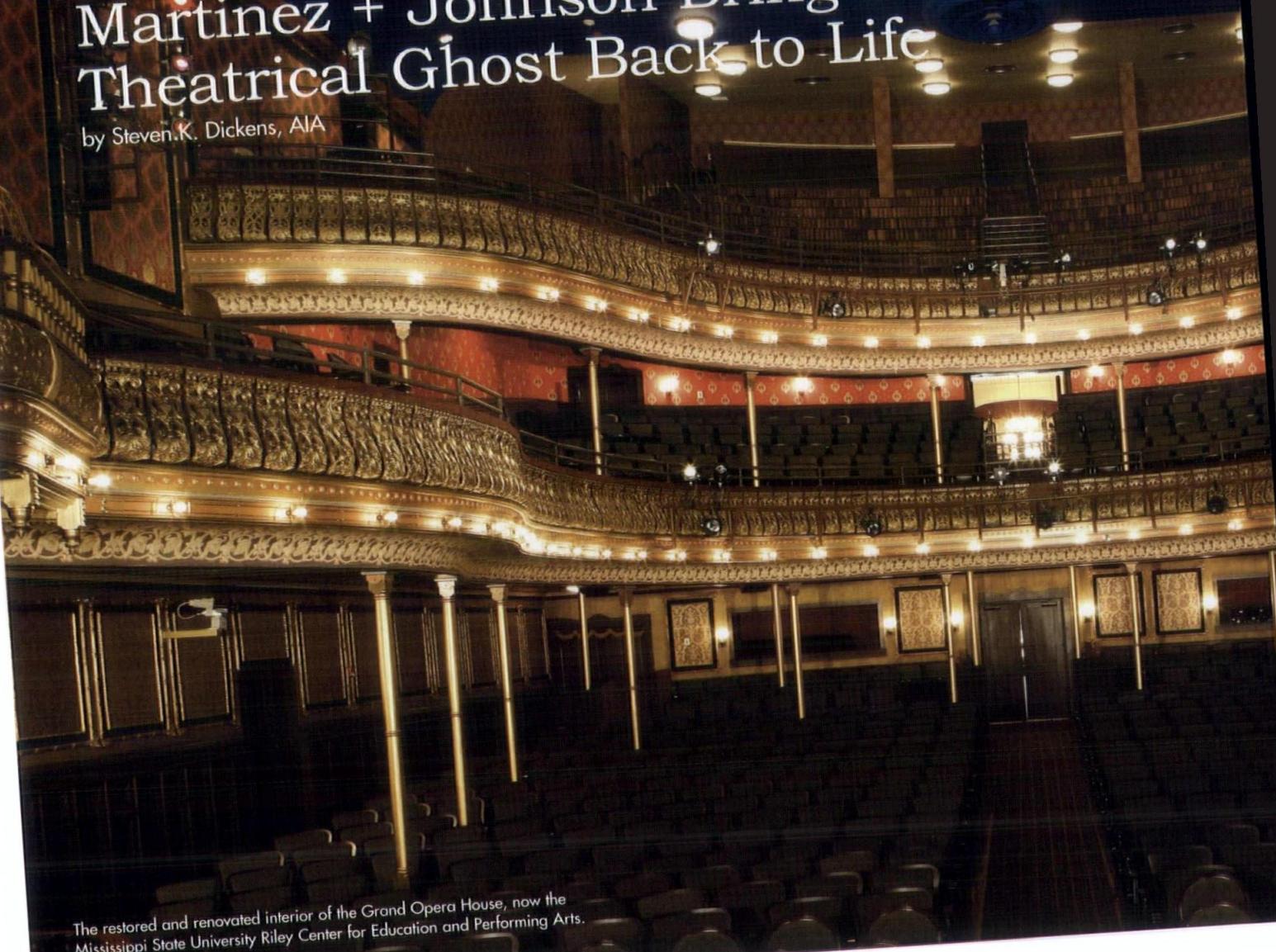


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Prime Meridian Restoration:

Martinez + Johnson Bring a Theatrical Ghost Back to Life

by Steven K. Dickens, AIA



The restored and renovated interior of the Grand Opera House, now the Mississippi State University Riley Center for Education and Performing Arts.

Meridian, Mississippi, rose from the ashes of the Civil War—literally—to see prosperity as a railroad hub. Amid the boom, in 1890, German-Jewish half-brothers Levi Rothenberg and Israel Marks opened a department store downtown. Almost immediately thereafter, the pair built an addition—a semi-separate building that extended the department store at the street level with room for a planned hotel above. The hotel was reprogrammed as a theater—named the Grand Opera House—but the façade,

which had been designed for a hotel, was not changed. Since the department store occupied the street level, that left room for only a small theater entrance: a handsome but modest pediment opening directly into a stair. The theater had no grand marquee—in fact, it had almost no street presence at all.

Converted to a movie theater in the early 1920s, the former opera house was closed in 1928 as a result of a bitter contract dispute between Marks and Rothenberg



Photo by Whitney Cox, New York, New York

(the owners) and the Saenger Amusement Company (a regional movie theater chain, which was the tenant). Apparently, Marks and Rothenberg intended to reopen the theater relatively quickly, without Saenger, but the dispute dragged on for decades, ending up at the U.S. Supreme Court. As a result, the theater ultimately remained closed for almost 80 years. It became "the stuff of legend," according to Washington architect **Tom Johnson, AIA**, whose firm, **Martinez + Johnson Architecture**, oversaw

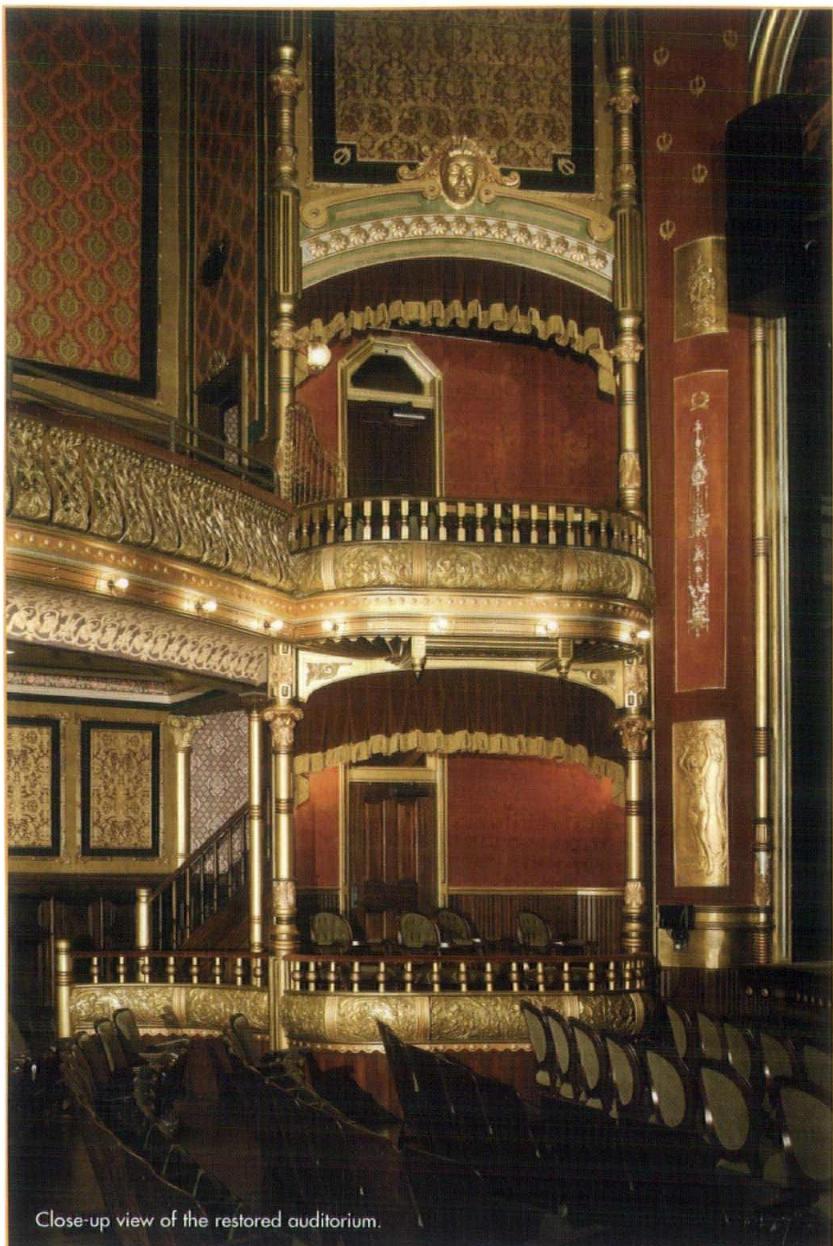
the elaborate renovation and restoration of the opera house. Many people were no longer certain the grand auditorium even existed, in part because of its lack of exterior architectural identity.

By the 1990s, the department store, and indeed much of downtown Meridian, was closed. But the business community of eastern Mississippi, having had some success attracting multinational manufacturers to the region, became interested in a revitalization of downtown, with an eye toward augmenting the commercial attractiveness of the city. Working with government—Meridian is the hometown of former Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, who delivered significant federal assistance—and other stakeholders, this push culminated in the renovation of the old Marks-Rothenberg store and Grand Opera House into the Mississippi State University Riley Center for Education and Performing Arts, which opened in 2006.

The original theater was designed by the prolific architects J.B. McElfatrick & Sons, of New York, who created over 400 theaters, including the National Theatre in downtown Washington (although subsequent renovations have removed most of the original fabric of that building). Martinez + Johnson, in some respects, may be regarded as a latter-day McElfatrick & Sons, inasmuch as it is a Washington firm with a national reputation for theater design. The firm is involved in local work, to be sure, such as the Howard Theatre restoration, but most of its projects are necessarily located elsewhere. These include new theaters for clients such as Live Nation and Clear Channel, but the majority consists of renovation or restoration of old theaters.

In fact, Martinez + Johnson had previously worked on a restoration of a McElfatrick-designed theater in the Berkshires whose plan was almost identical to that of the Meridian Grand Opera House, according to Johnson. Yet despite a portfolio of some 30 theater projects, including highly ornamented ones like the Boston Opera House [see ARCHITECTUREDC, Winter 2009], the architects had never encountered one with such a dizzying array of decorative surface treatments and blend of styles and materials, everything from neoclassical cast-iron railings to Moorish-patterned anaglypta (a kind of embossed wallpaper), from a papier-mâché proscenium to gold-painted burlap surrounding panels of Chinese-motif wallpapers. To make matters more confusing, there were many instances in which the application of these elements was inconsistent and puzzlingly asymmetrical.

Moreover, thanks to the abundance of "attic stock" left over from the frequent cosmetic renovations to the adjacent department store, there were even more layers of wallpaper than usual—a comprehensive catalog of late 19th- and early 20th-century techniques, colors, and styles—flocked, gilded, silkscreened, hand-painted, even hand-cutout (in which decorative elements of a wallpaper were cut out and glued over another wallpaper). Another unusual feature was the lack of electric lights: most of the lighting, including the focal "sunburner" in the center of the ceiling, had never been electrified.



Close-up view of the restored auditorium.

Photo by Whitney Cox, New York, New York

Project: The Grand Opera House

Architects:

Martinez+Johnson Architecture PC; Washington, DC

Associate Architects:

Pryor & Morrow Architects; Columbus, MS

Theater Consultants:

Schuler Shook Theater Planners; Minneapolis, MN

Structural Engineers:

Lundy & Franke Engineering, Inc.; San Antonio, TX

Mechanical/Electrical/Plumbing Engineers:

IC Thomasson Associates, Inc.; Brookhaven, MS

Acoustical Engineers:

Akustiks, LLC; South Norwalk, CT

Decorative Surfaces:

Evergreen Architectural Arts, Inc.; New York, NY, and Chicago, IL

Architectural Historians/Preservation Consultants:

EHT Traceries, Inc.; Washington, DC

Existing Building Documentation:

Quantapoint; Pittsburgh, PA

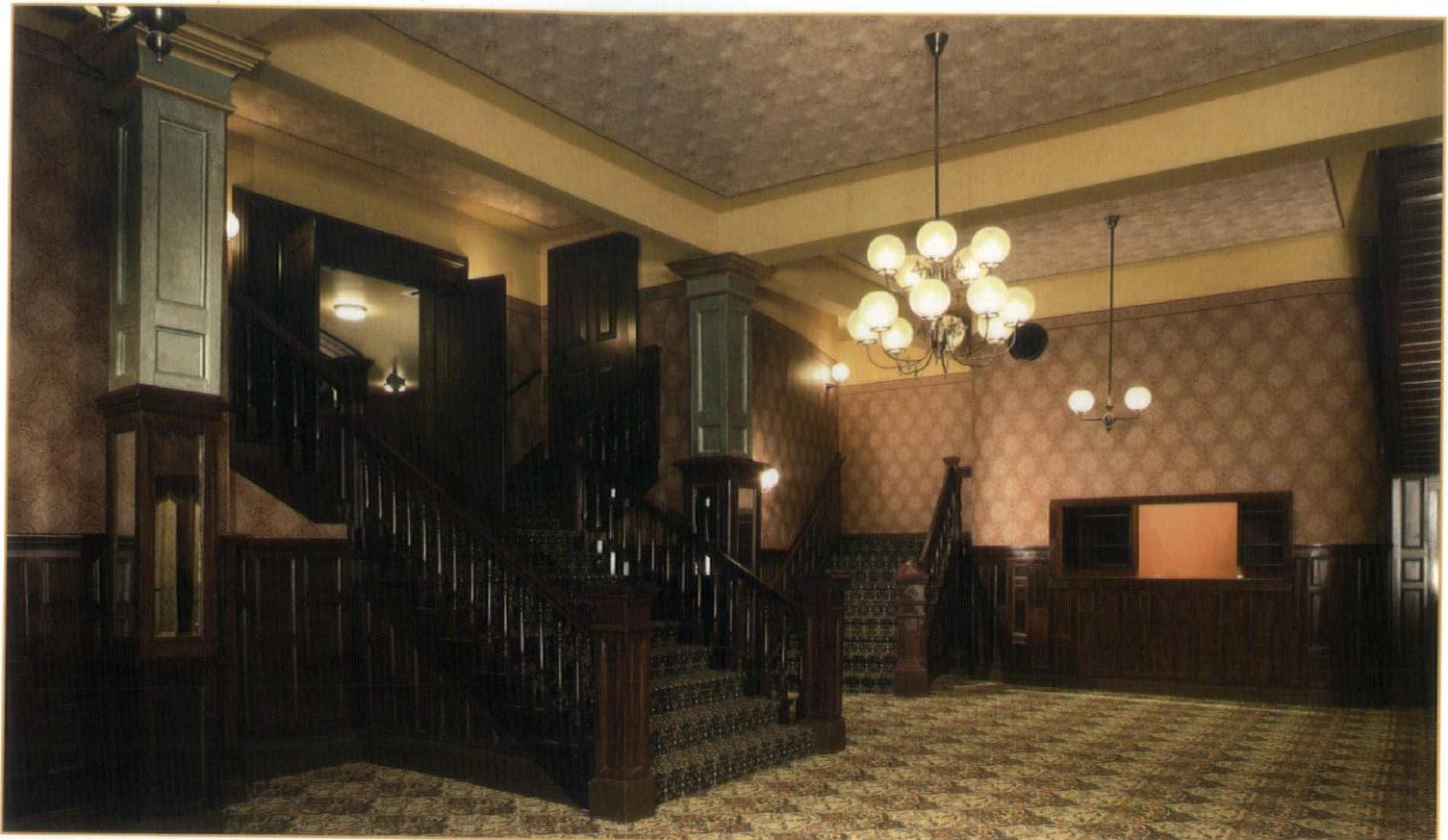
In restorations of this nature, digital surveying (done by Quantapoint for the Meridian opera house) is a powerful and time-saving tool, but in the end, each element is its own puzzle that must be solved. Over a five-year period, Martinez + Johnson's architects led a small army of craftsmen and consultants to record, analyze, and ascertain how to recreate or restore each element. The inherent complexity of this process only increases with the quantity and stylistic variety of elements, as was the case in this project.

A related problem was the determination of which decorative elements to use in the restoration. In its almost four decades of operation, the theater had had hundreds of wallpapers and other elements, many of which would not meet current fire and building codes. The exterior of the building had changed, also, most notably when a tornado blew off several towers. Ultimately, it was decided to "tell the entire story, not just bring it back to a particular point in time," says Johnson, meaning that the decision-making process revolved around a somewhat subjective and intuitive approach. The result uses elements from many different periods, which seems appropriate for a theater whose superlative is aesthetic complication.

Yet another problem was the incorporation of modern HVAC and fire-control systems—sprinklers, smoke detectors, fire alarms, and so forth. The main air diffusers, which, due to their necessarily large size, are almost impossible to conceal, are evident as new round elements in the ceiling, recalling the original (now-restored and electrified) "sunburner." But the rest of these elements are coordinated almost invisibly, providing the necessary protection and comfort without altering the interior's historic appearance.

Meanwhile, the architects had to solve larger planning problems. The opera house had been squeezed into space originally planned for a different purpose, leaving little room for lobbies or back-of-house facilities. Vertical circulation consisted of a crazy series of wooden stairs. Many of these problems were resolved by expanding the theater space into the former department store and another adjacent building at the rear of the complex. Stairs, bathrooms, and dressing rooms were moved into these spaces, along with new elements such as elevators and desperately-needed adjacent staging areas, a necessity for many kinds of modern performing arts.

Still another vexing problem was the fact that the structure of the original buildings—both the store and the theater—was failing. The brick was very soft and crumbling, in many areas no longer serving a structural function. Foundation settling—measurable in feet—created significantly sloping floors. In response, masonry was restored and in many places, floors were jacked up. But the primary structural problems were resolved by the insertion of new steel or concrete within the old shell—essentially a whole new structure which simultaneously braces the old exterior walls and holds up the floors and roofs. This includes the stagehouse—the stage, flyloft, orchestra pit, and understage areas—which, to meet stringent structural and acoustical requirements, is of concrete.



Restored lobby of the opera house.

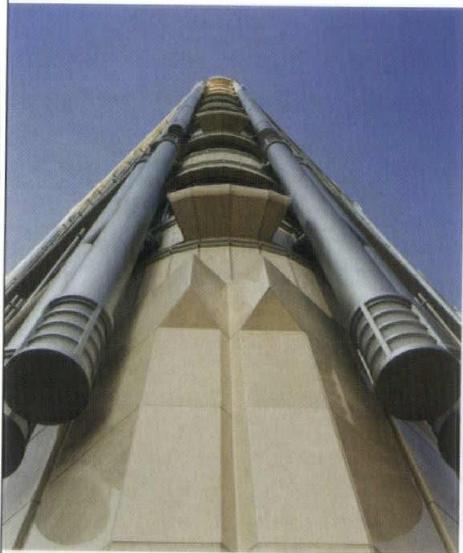
Photo by Whitney Cox, New York, New York

The result belies the complexity of the process. The restored opera house seems effortlessly to provide the beauty, comfort, safety, and functionality needed for audiences and performers in touring shows, dance troupes, small operas, symphonic music, and other performing arts. It is sometimes used for large gatherings related to the educational and conference center spaces that occupy the rest of the Riley Center (primarily designed by Mississippi architects Pryor & Morrow).

"We know more than just about anyone else about these old theaters," comments Tom Johnson. "But we learn a lot in every project. They're all different." He acknowledges, though, that the Meridian Opera House is a bit more different than the rest: "It's the most exuberant theater interior I've ever seen."

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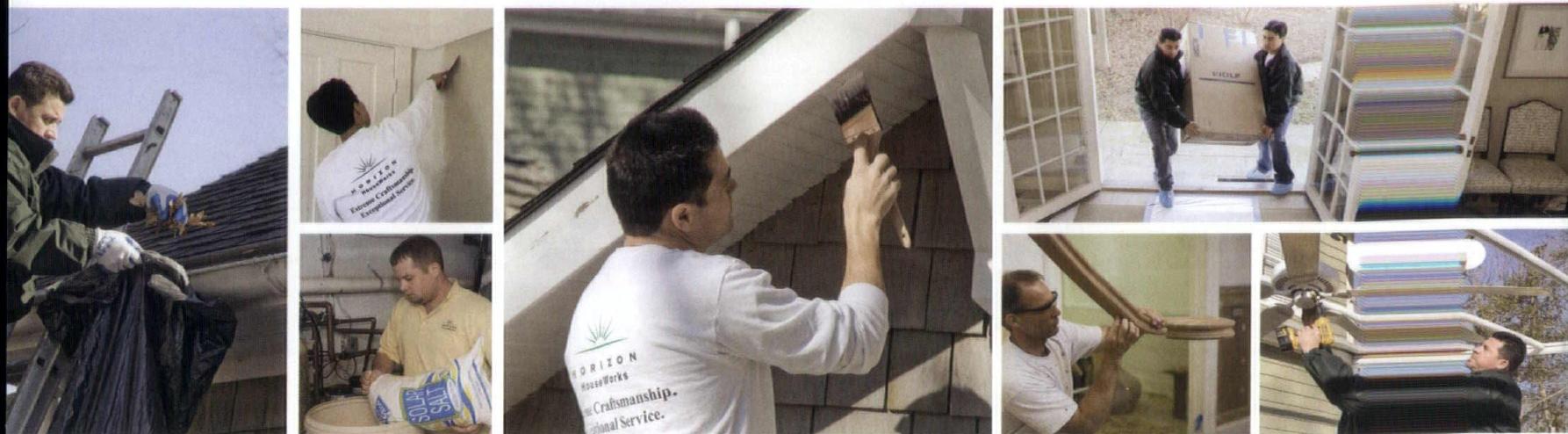
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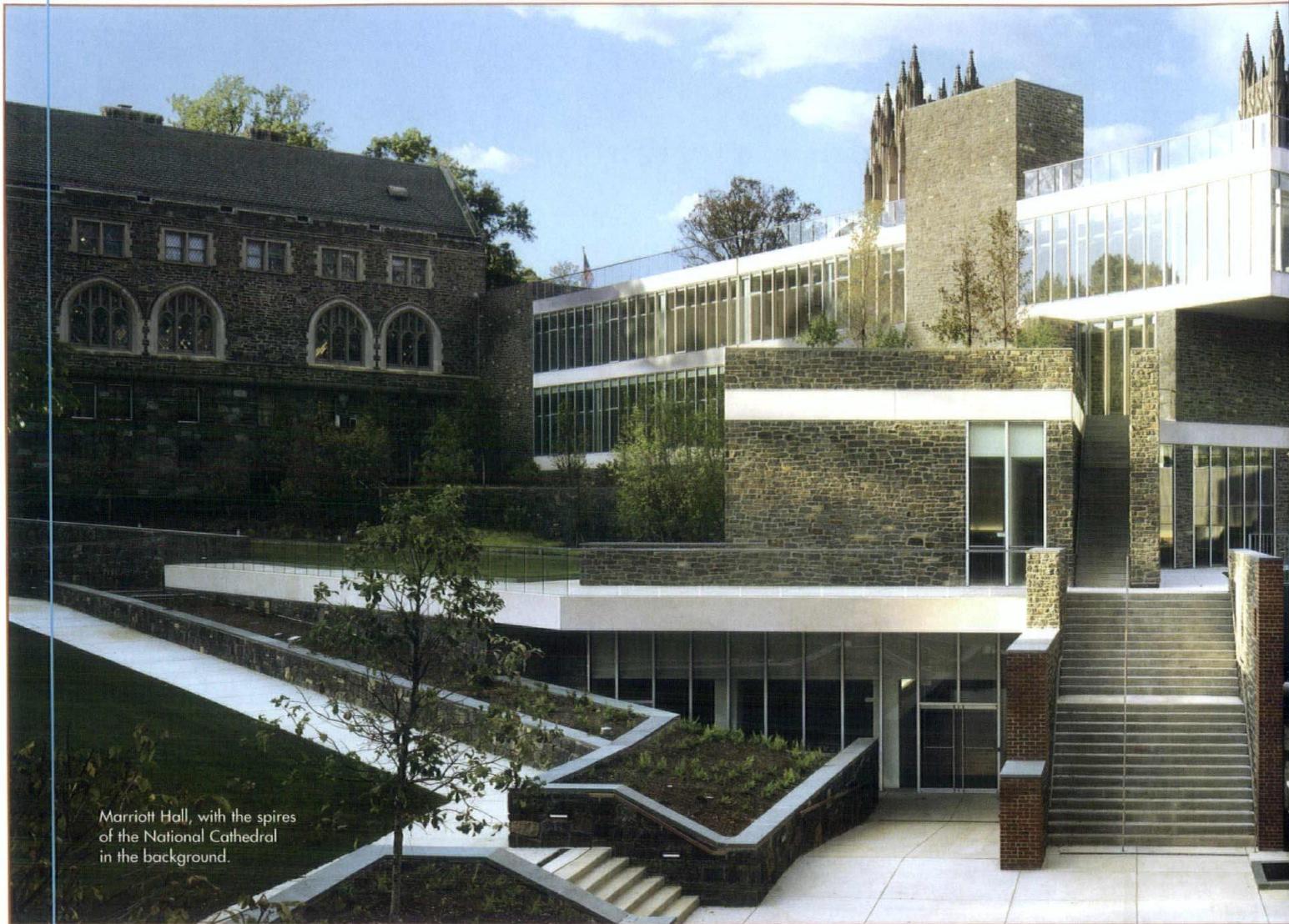
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Marriott Hall, with the spires of the National Cathedral in the background.

Photo by Robert Polidori

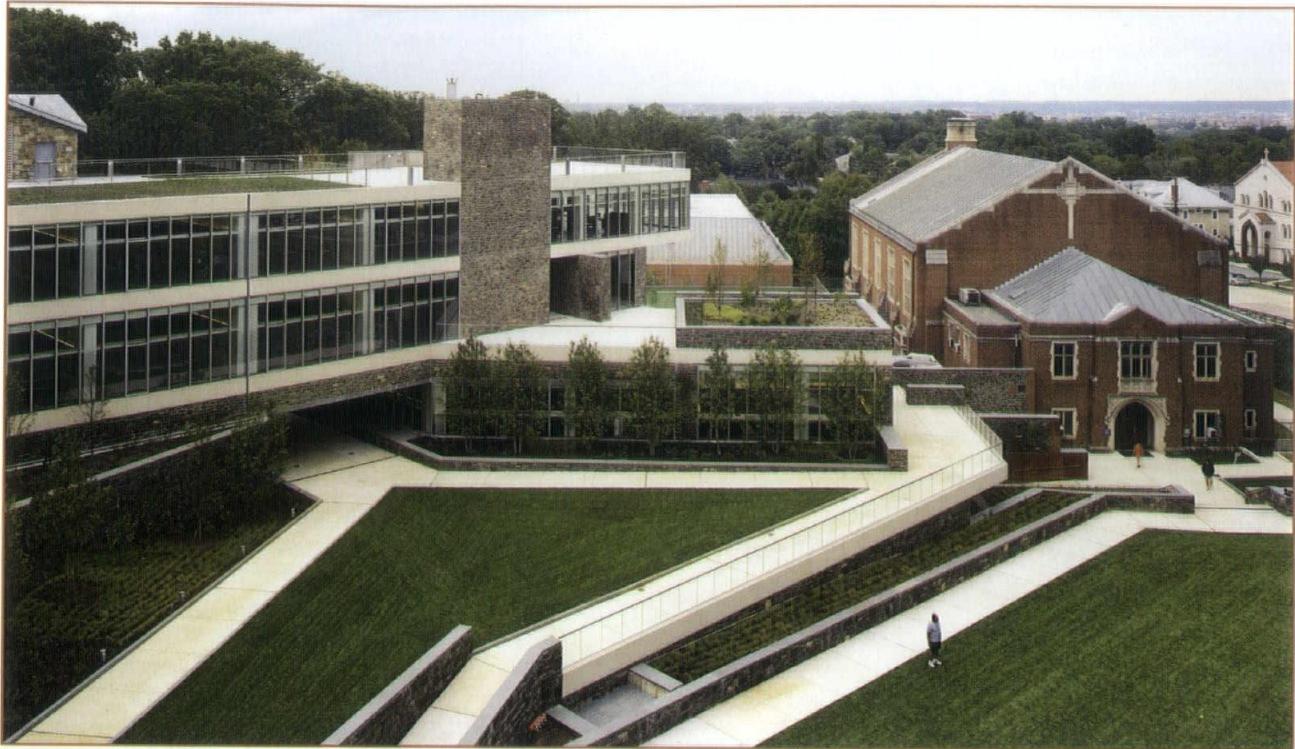
Places of Learning

Architecture Firms Bring National Expertise to Local Work

by Sarah Smith

Our places of learning—libraries, schools, community centers—are undergoing a dramatic transformation. Gone are the formal, hulking structures of yore, the dark, endless hallways, and the shushing schoolmarm. In their place are light-filled spaces, rooms intended for informal gathering and discussion, and the free flow of academic and social energy—all in the name of interconnectivity. The 21st-century place of learning is designed to encourage interaction, and ultimately, to show that learning is a continuous process that cannot, and *should* not, be confined.

Four local projects—one recently completed, the others under construction or on the boards—demonstrate how these new ideas about learning are assuming architectural form. All of the featured projects were designed by national architecture firms with DC offices. Increasingly, such multi-city firms are practicing in ways that defy geographical divisions. Project teams may involve professionals in different states or even different countries, using digital technologies to collaborate. Such arrangements allow the firms to take advantage of expertise wherever it may reside, with obvious potential benefits to the quality of their work.



View of Marriott Hall from above, showing grass-covered terrace over service spaces.

Photo by Robert Polidori

No Ordinary Marriott

St. Albans School, the prestigious private boys' school in Northwest Washington, opened its doors to just 59 students in the fall of 1909. Since that time, the institution has seen tremendous, though somewhat disorderly, growth. By 2006, when the school approached **Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM)** to design a 25,000 square-foot expansion and renovate some 30,000 square feet of existing space, the campus was a jumble of disparate structures. SOM was asked to provide a new student center, additional classrooms, faculty offices, a library, and an auditorium. While addressing these specific facility needs, the architects were also charged with creating a cohesive linkage—in terms of both form and function—between four of the school's existing buildings.

Situated on the grounds of the National Cathedral, St. Albans School derives its name from Mount St. Albans, the highest elevation in the District of Columbia. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., designed the cathedral's surroundings, creating a network of "pilgrim paths" that guide visitors through the lush garden, exposing picturesque views of the city, and finally depositing them at the cathedral.

SOM took cues from Olmsted's landscape when developing the design for the St. Albans School addition, named Marriott Hall in honor of its principal benefactor, J. Willard Marriott. Through a network of stairways and passageways, coupled with skillful siting of the new structure, the architects were able to weave the buildings together and to link St. Albans' lower campus with its main entrance at a level 60 feet higher. Adjacent gathering spaces such as a café help to enliven the circulation routes. Cantilevered classrooms and open-air nooks allow for better physical and visual connections to the cathedral, its surrounding gardens, and the city beyond.

The various levels connect interior with exterior and private with public, and encourage what **Roger Duffy, FAIA**, design partner in SOM's New York office and lead designer of the Marriott Hall project, called "chance interactions" between faculty and students (the Washington office of SOM oversaw the execution of the project). "Learning," says Duffy, "is not confined to hours spent in a classroom." Instead, he sees it as a "continuous process," and something that is enhanced by the acknowledgment of context, perspective, and the breaking down of traditional barriers that suggest: "In this building you learn," thereby implying, "outside of this building, you don't."

Project: St. Albans, Marriott Hall

Architects:

Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP

Landscape Architects:

Richard Burke Associates

Structural Engineers:

Arup Consulting Engineers

Civil Engineers:

Jacobs Engineering

Mechanical/Electrical/Plumbing/ Fire Protection Engineers:

Arup Consulting Engineers

Telecom, AV, Acoustics Consultants:

Arup Consulting Engineers

Security Consultants:

Access International

Vertical Transportation Consultants:

Lerch Bates & Associates

Lighting Consultants:

Arup Consulting Engineers

Food Service Consultants:

Hopkins Food Service Specialists, Inc.

Code Consultants:

**Code Consultants Professional
Engineers PC**

Marriott Hall is integrated into the St. Albans campus not only through intricate circulation patterns, but also through sensitive aesthetic considerations. Olmsted's landscape architectural vocabulary is extended to the green space surrounding the new building, and to its extensive green roof. SOM was also careful to connect the new building visually to the school's existing neo-Gothic structures by cladding much of the exterior in blue stone, which very closely matches the Potomac stone used in the original buildings. The new classrooms are lined with floor-to-ceiling glass, allowing for stunning views of the surrounding landscape and, of course, natural lighting within.

Thanks to thoughtful material choices, careful coordination of floor plans and building sections, and a nuanced detailing, SOM's Marriott Hall is a work of architecture that simultaneously stands out and fits in.

Rethinking Public Libraries

In 1896, the District of Columbia Public Library was created by an act of Congress "to furnish books and other printed matter and information service convenient to the homes and offices of all residents of the District." Neighborhood branches followed shortly thereafter. At that time, libraries functioned primarily as repositories of valuable documents and information; their role as guardian was expressed in their solid architecture.

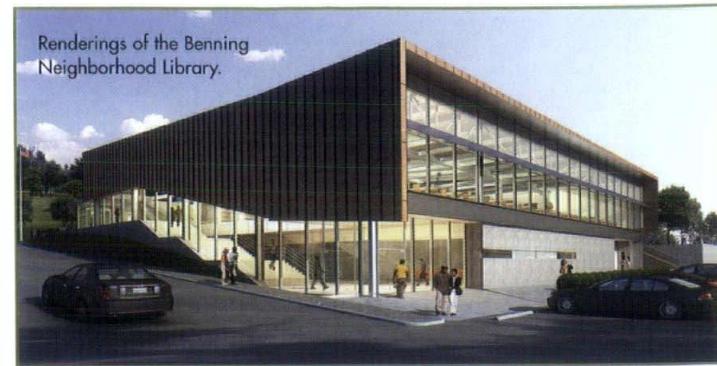
More and more, however, libraries are now coming to be seen as places of dialogue and exchange, or, as the DC Public Library (DCPL) system notes on its website, "destinations, anchors, [and] a place for learning and meeting that is welcoming and comfortable for the whole community." This reflects a cultural shift that has dramatically changed our idea of the traditional library from the inside out.

As part of DCPL's Library Building Program, a city-wide initiative to develop a neighborhood library system that is both environmentally sustainable and responsive to the needs of the surrounding community, participants at neighborhood hearings recently enjoyed an unprecedented opportunity to influence the selection of architects for new facilities. Based on such input, the firm of **Davis Brody Bond Aedas** was commissioned to design two new branches: the Benning Neighborhood Library and the Watha T. Daniel/Shaw Neighborhood Library. Davis Brody Bond Aedas is based in New York and has an office in Washington, DC. It is also part of the Aedas group, a global consortium with professional offices in more than 30 cities.

The two branch libraries that the firm is designing have much in common. Each is programmed for 20,000 square feet of space, and is expected to achieve LEED® Silver certification. To this end, each will include passive solar control and daylight management, energy-efficient ventilation systems, and extensive use of recycled and renewable materials. Equally important, both libraries are conceived as open, welcoming facilities that may draw people who have rarely or never been library patrons before.

The Benning Neighborhood Library

Nestled among residential and commercial buildings, the Benning Neighborhood Library is designed to allow access both from



Courtesy of Davis Brody Bond Aedas. Rendering by Silkroad.



Courtesy of Davis Brody Bond Aedas. Rendering by Silkroad.

Project: DC Public Library Projects

Architects:

Davis Brody Bond Aedas;
Washington, DC

General Contractors:

Forrester Construction Company
Structural/Civil Engineers:

Delon Hampton and Associates, Chartered

Mechanical/Electrical/Plumbing Engineers:

JVP Engineers, P.C.

Lighting Designers:

MCLA

Landscape Architects:

Lee + Papa and Associates

Acoustics/IT/AV Consultants:

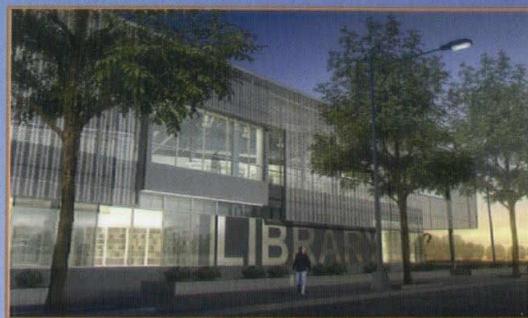
Polysonics

Benning Road on the upper level, and from a parking lot on the lower level. Pedestrian circulation between the upper and lower levels was a key concern for the architects, whose solution was to add a public stairway connecting the two levels that is visible to visitors both inside and outside of the library. The staircase alludes to the grand staircases of the great neoclassical libraries of the past, but without the same stony formality. In this case, the staircase and adjacent library entrances expose the inner hum of a busy neighborhood space, and offer their friendly invitation.

The upper level of the library includes reference and periodical sections, reading rooms for those in need of a quiet space, and a children's library—in line with DCPL's new initiative to offer children's program rooms for story time and other activities in all of the city's libraries. While the upper level houses the bulk of the collection, the lower level allows for more varied communal uses. It includes a multi-purpose room large enough to hold 100 people, smaller meeting rooms, and an exhibition space. **Peter Cook, AIA**, principal in the Washington office of Davis Brody Bond Aedas, believes that "the introduction of conference rooms, community spaces, self-check-out, and open



Renderings of the Watha T. Daniel/Shaw Neighborhood Library.



Courtesy of Davis Brody Bond Aedas. Rendering by Silkroad.

stacks has allowed the public to feel a sense of belonging in their libraries."

The exterior of the Benning Neighborhood Library, scheduled for completion in March of this year, is meant to fit comfortably in the surrounding community. "The [warm] color palette of earth tones and a copper panel façade blend in with [the] residential setting," explained Cook. "[The library] is situated in a bowl-like condition with ample western sun. The copper panels chosen for the exterior will reflect the sun and provide a glow in the late afternoon."

The Watha T. Daniel/Shaw Neighborhood Library

Now under construction on a triangular site near Howard University, the Shaw Neighborhood Library is due for completion this coming summer. More urban than its Benning Neighborhood

counterpart, this branch will sit in an area with a large variety of uses: multi-family residential, commercial, educational, and religious. Because the Shaw Neighborhood Library will provide a gathering place for all who live, learn, work, and worship in the area, Cook believes that "the building marks this important intersection as a civic place."

The Shaw Neighborhood Library will be composed of three floors: one below grade and two above. The main lobby provides access to all three levels including the lower level, which houses the multi-purpose room and other community spaces. The children's library and staff offices are located on the main level, and the upper level of the library holds the adult collection, reference and periodical sections, and reading rooms.

The new building replaces a generally unloved Brutalist structure with pock-marked concrete surfaces that evoked memories of gritty urban life in the mid-20th century. By contrast, the Davis Brody Bond Aedas design is notable for its lightweight, perforated metal screen, made of recycled aluminum, which will lend a sleek, sophisticated

quality to the building while also filtering daylight entering the interior. Near the center of the Rhode Island Avenue façade, the screen is interrupted to reveal a large expanse of glass reminiscent of a picture window in a modern suburban house. The building will be animated by the constantly changing character of light and shadow dancing across its intricate façades.

Living and Learning

The Living Classrooms Foundation is a non-profit educational organization with an emphasis on learning through direct experience—that is, “learning by doing.” Developed for high-risk students who could not succeed in a traditional classroom setting, Living Classrooms “affords youth and young adults...the opportunity for positive work experiences and the development of marketable job skills.”

When Living Classrooms decided to expand beyond its hometown of Baltimore into Washington, DC, the foundation hired **STUDIOS Architecture** to design a building that would not only reflect its active, community-oriented mission, but also inspire curiosity and interest among the general public. Fundraising for the construction of the building is currently under way.

The Living Classrooms DC headquarters site was donated to the organization by Forest City Washington, and once built, will be part of a large development called “The Yards.” The overall project represents an effort to renew and redefine the Anacostia riverfront area, and will include street-level retail, residential units, and office space. The Living Classrooms building will contribute an interactive, community-oriented learning space to this new development, and will serve two significant functions: First, it will provide valuable life skills for Washington youth, and second, it will engage residents and visitors to share in the students’ experiences.

Brian Pilot, AIA, associate principal of STUDIOS, describes the Living Classrooms building as an amalgam of three separate elements. The first, *Service*, is the volume that houses the mechanical



Renderings of the Living Classrooms building along the Anacostia Waterfront.

Courtesy of STUDIOS Architecture

systems, stairwells, and other relatively mundane building components, and is the first element that visitors see when approaching from the city side. It is a mostly solid mass enveloped in COR-TEN steel, which is designed to rust in a controlled, even fashion, yielding a richly textured, reddish-brown surface. Its strong color and rugged aesthetic connect the building to the industrial history of the area and, in particular, to the red-brick Navy Yard Power Plant immediately to the north.

The second element, *Public*, is represented by the glassy enclosure at river level that houses the reception area and the metal shop. Its transparency is intended to engage the landscape, providing views of the river and surrounding waterfront development, but also to introduce the public in the activities within. Pilot refers to this level and the surrounding walkways as examples of “site activation,” as the open design minimizes the barriers that distinguish private space from public space. As a result, the entry area encourages movement, investigation, and mingling.

The third element, *Experience*, constitutes the upper levels of the Living Classrooms facility. These spaces are specifically designed to form a private zone for teaching and learning. The metal screen that wraps around this portion of the building bends and then straightens again, alternately exposing panoramic views and creating privacy within. The gently undulating metal bands also abstractly evoke the flow of the river itself, while serving the practical function of keeping the hot summer sun from penetrating the glass façades.

The Living Classrooms building may represent a new breed of educational facilities, responding to the particular learning needs of a sometimes-marginalized group, while simultaneously inviting the attention and participation of the community as a whole. It promises to be a beacon, both in its mission and in its architecture. ■

Project: Living Classrooms

Architects:

STUDIOS Architecture; Washington, DC



Courtesy of STUDIOS Architecture



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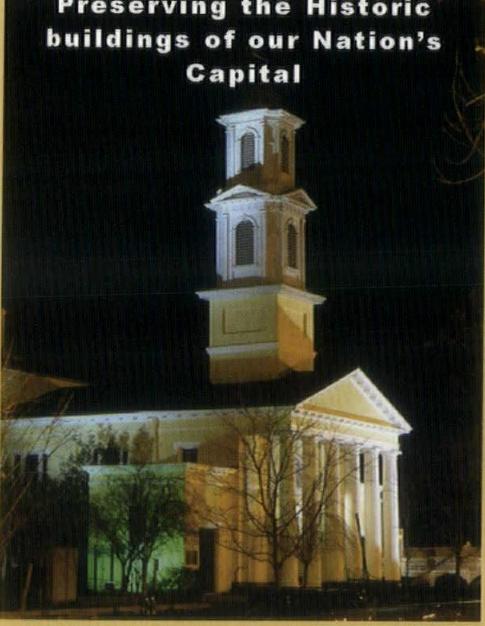
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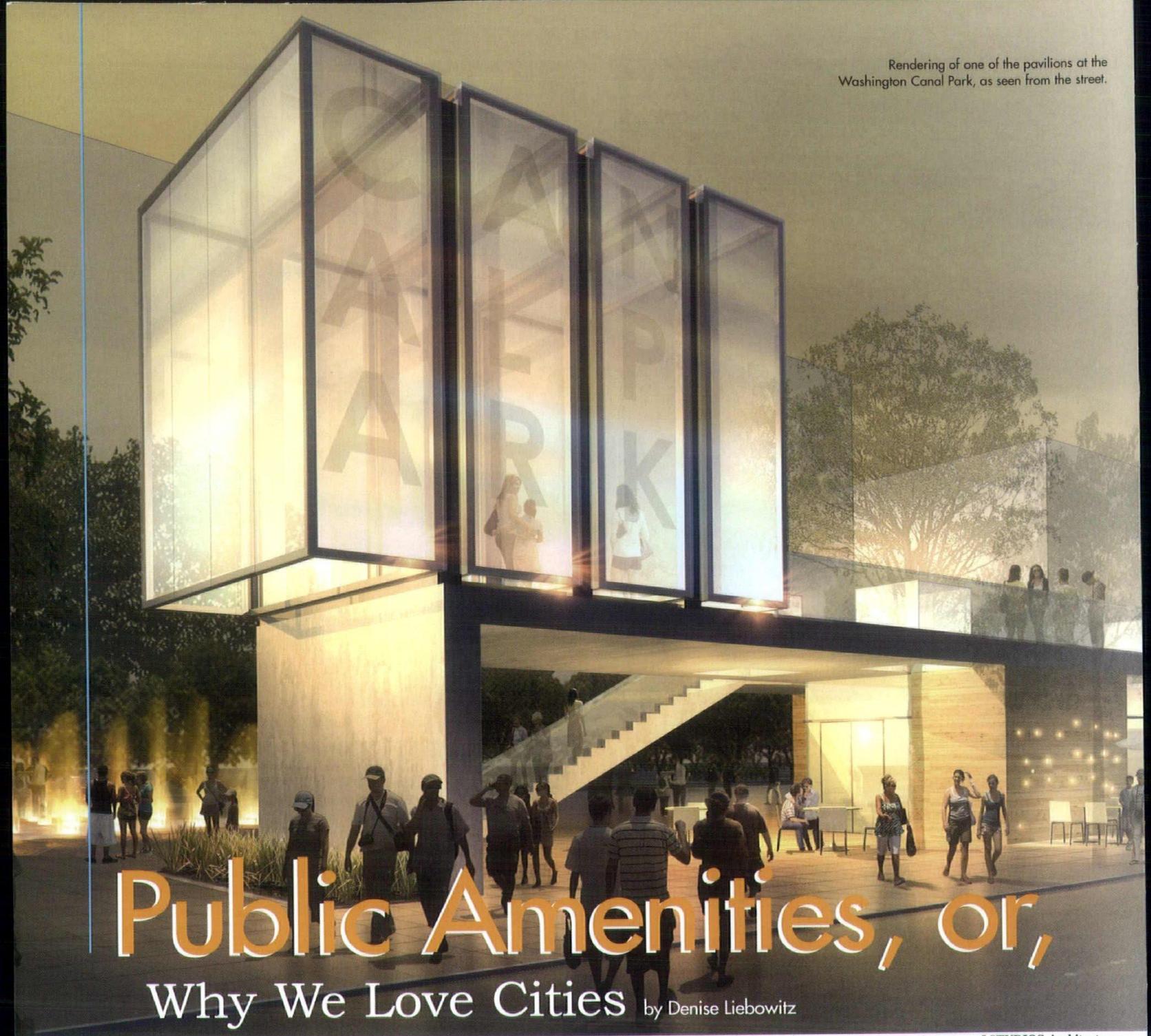
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Rendering of one of the pavilions at the Washington Canal Park, as seen from the street.



Public Amenities, or,

Why We Love Cities

by Denise Liebowitz

Courtesy of STUDIOS Architecture

Public spaces are the stitches that hold together the urban fabric. It is these open-to-all places that beckon us out from the privacy (even isolation) of our homes and offices and provide the setting for our civic interaction and social exchange. The success of a city is often defined by the quality of its public spaces. Our favorite communities are those with welcoming and accessible parks, plazas, waterfronts, and civic and cultural spaces that provide the vibrancy, diversity, and excitement that enrich city life. Washington's public realm is getting three new amenities that we all can enjoy.

A New City Park Recalls its Historic Origins

In one of the country's largest urban waterfront transformations, the 500-acre swath that stretches along the Anacostia River and north to the US Capitol is emerging as Washington's newest mixed-use destination. Known as the Capitol Riverfront, the area's landmarks include Nationals Park, the Navy Yard, and the US Department of Transportation headquarters. Although the current economic climate has slowed development activity in the area, the Capitol Riverfront neighborhood already boasts 2,347 new residential units including apartments, condos, co-ops and townhouses, a

200-room hotel, over 6 million square feet of office space, and significant new retail space.

In the heart of this revitalization, space is now being made for **Washington Canal Park**, a three-block stretch between 2nd Street and 2nd Place, SE, which extends from the Department of Transportation building on M north to I Street. Named for the city's historic waterway system that in the nineteenth century connected the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers, the new park sits where a canal once ran between Tiber Creek and the Washington Navy Yard. In more recent years, the park site, like much of the surrounding area, suffered from blight and neglect. Until very recently, it was an overgrown and contaminated parking lot for school buses. The design of the new park both recalls its watery past and defines its future as a vibrant community gathering place in an exciting new neighborhood.

The new space is being developed by the nonprofit Canal Park Development Association. The development group hired the renowned landscape architecture firm OLIN to design the park,

and OLIN brought in the Washington office of the international firm **STUDIOS Architecture** to design the park buildings. **Brian Pilot, AIA**, design architect on the project, said that working with OLIN has been a "wonderful collaborative experience. As a result, the structures are one with the landscape; there is little delineation between them and the parkland."

Each of the park's three blocks has a distinctive identity. The first block, directly across M Street from the Department of Transportation headquarters, is the most urban and active part of the park. Here, along the eastern side of the block, a two-level pavilion with an adjacent outdoor plaza will house a café. Pilot explained that the structure's green roof, reached by a wide staircase, is an integral part of the park, and he thinks of it as an "extrusion" of the adjacent water features. Visitors can explore glassy rooftop structures—the architect called them "lanterns"—that will glow in the evening with dramatic lighting and perhaps video projections. The plaza and immediate surrounding area will feature trees,

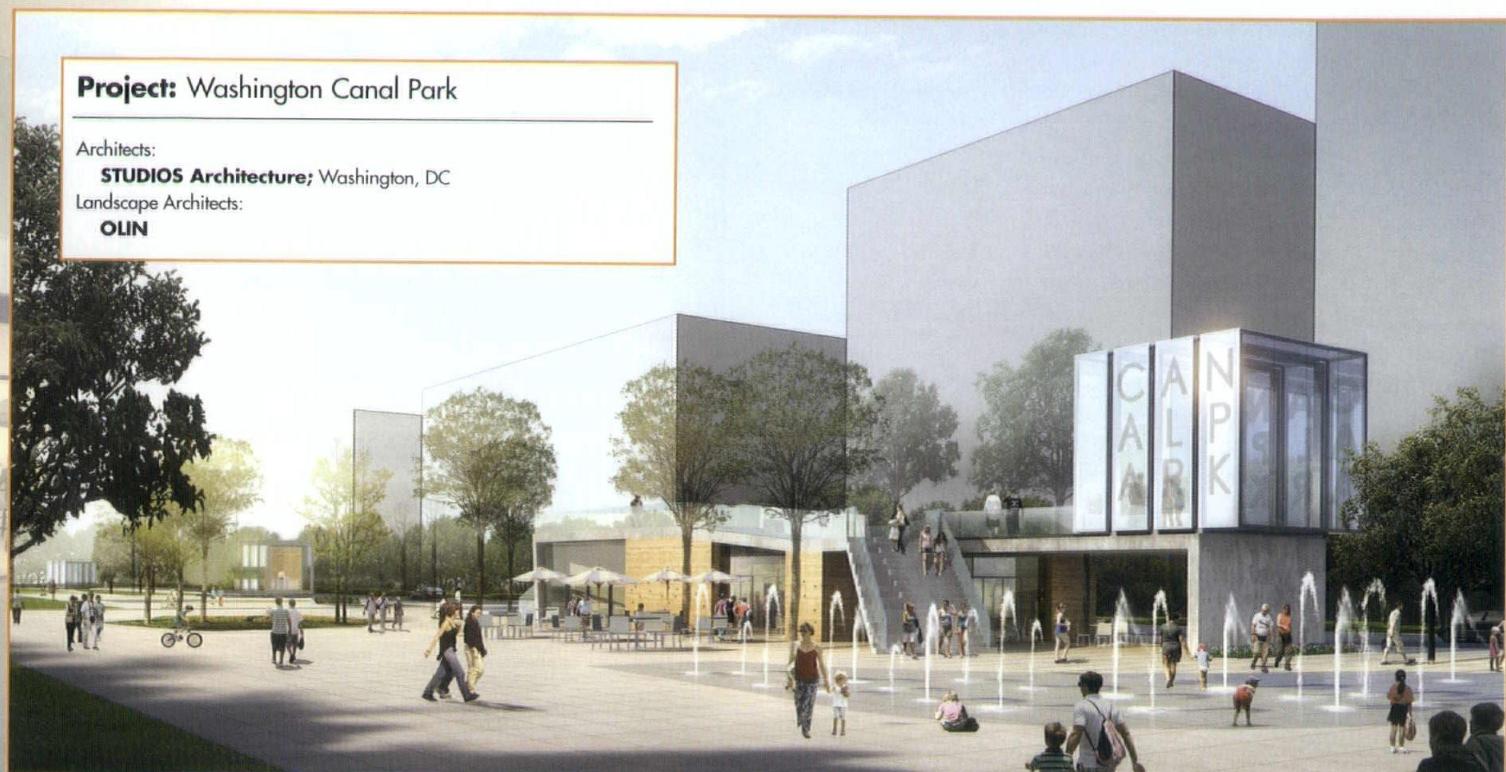
Project: Washington Canal Park

Architects:

STUDIOS Architecture; Washington, DC

Landscape Architects:

OLIN



Rendering of one of the pavilions at the Washington Canal Park, with fountain in the foreground.

Courtesy of STUDIOS Architecture

landscaping, sculpture, and interactive water features.

Running along the entire length of this block and continuing into the next two blocks, a linear rain garden will recall the park's canal origins. For the architects, this ribbon of water and the distinctive form of the pavilion with its lanterns will evoke images of floating canal barges of the past. In winter, the outdoor plaza and looping waterway will be transformed into an ice-skating space, reminiscent, said Pilot, of skating on European canals (or, for that matter, on Washington's own C&O Canal).

The middle block of the park will include a children's play area and pavilion with toy storage and a small performance stage. The structure in this block is topped with a deconstructed interpretation of the lantern that appears in the adjacent blocks.

The northern block of the park is the most informal, with plenty of grass, trees and open spaces, perfect for open-air movies, a farmers market, or small concerts. A 15-foot translucent cube here will provide storage for lawn chairs, and is itself the final lantern in a design motif that visually unites these three blocks of city parkland.

The park is being designed as a model of sustainability and aspires to be a "zero-energy" public space. The park's rain gardens will manage storm water runoff, and solar-powered LED street lights and photovoltaic roof panels will provide all or nearly all of the park's power needs.

The Canal Park Development Association expects the park to open in spring 2011.

Bikestation: Clean, Green, and Cool

Downtown parking is a headache not only for motorists, but for bicyclists, too. Even a locked bike on a city sidewalk is easy prey for vandals and bad weather. Bike garages, long common in Europe and even other parts of the US, are finally coming to Washington. The sleek new **Bicycle Transit Center at Union Station** allows riders to safely stow their bikes and know that they will find their conveyances with both wheels still attached when they return.

The glass-and-steel swoosh nestled between two Beaux Arts beauties—Union Station and the National Postal Museum—stands in dramatic contrast to the massive granite facades of its neighbors. The structure brings to mind I.M. Pei's glass pyramids rising in the Louvre courtyard. Others have likened the shape to a racing helmet, and NPR commentator Ari Shapiro reported it looked like "the upper part of a bicycle tire sticking out of the ground."

Originally, District of Columbia Department of Transportation planners suggested a concrete cinder block structure for the bike garage. But Washington-based project designer **Don Paine, RA**, of **KGP Design Studio**, a firm with offices in Honolulu and the Philippines, said he sought a design that did not mimic the surrounding neo-classical architecture, but more broadly related to the context of its location on Columbus Plaza. The train station's original riveted steel platform canopies, its arched colonnades, and the plaza's bronze street lamps all helped him find the final design.

The 2,000-square-foot, totally transparent structure with gentle, ovoid curves provides parking spaces for 150 bikes, a changing room, lockers, and a small retail area. The structure is actually something between a canopy and a building, with operable louvers that both allow airflow and provide protection from the elements. The side facing the Postal Museum consists of interlocking glass panes supported by steel structural members. The side facing the train station is a single pane of partially fritted glass with steel louvers for light control. Held in compression, these structural elements resemble the graceful arcs and curves of a bicycle frame or a rim-and-spoke wheel configuration. The steel-tube frame and glazing maximize lighting and efficiency.

The facility is part of a growing network of nonprofit Bikestations springing up in cities across the country. The facility is staffed 66 hours a week and offers bike rentals and bike repairs. Washington's Bikestation allows commuters to take public transportation to Union Station, pick up their bicycles, and go to work, shopping, or out on the town. Cyclists can sign up for memberships or pay a small daily fee to lock their bikes in the secure double-height racks that take up most of the building's space. Guided city tours from the new facility will kick off in the spring.

One happy bike-riding commuter was reported recently saying, "At last I can now buy a bike that's worth more than my lock."

Project: Bicycle Transit Center

Architects:

KGP Design Studio; Washington, DC

Engineers/Project Managers:

Parsons Transportation Group

Consultants:

Bike Parking Operators

Bike Station; Long Beach, CA

General Contractor:

Grunley-Walsh

Glazing Fabricators:

Waltek; Cincinnati, OH



The Bicycle Transit Center adjacent to Union Station.

Courtesy of KGP Design Studio



The Bicycle Transit Center with the US Capitol in the background.

Courtesy of KGP Design Studio

View from inside the Bicycle Transit Center, with Union Station's façade visible through fritted glass.

Courtesy of KGP Design Studio

A Grande Dame Finally Embraces Her Waterfront

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the nation's cultural showcase and a presidential monument, stands stranded and inaccessible in the midst of a spaghetti-like tangle of highways. Separated from the river on the west by Rock Creek Parkway and surrounded on all other fronts by high-speed roadways and access ramps, the approach for pedestrians is daunting, even dangerous. It wasn't supposed to be this way. Kennedy Center architect Edward Durrell Stone originally imagined his building well removed from the roadways; there were even plans to relocate Rock Creek Parkway so the new cultural center could sit directly on the Potomac riverfront. However, as budget concerns mounted and the car culture boomed, such ambitious plans were abandoned, and the building was wedged into the existing roadway system, turning its back to the river.

Since then, generations of planners and architects have dreamed of creating a direct connection between the Kennedy Center and the river. Federal planners have long called for such a link as a way to encourage waterfront activity and improve pedestrian access. A lion of the Washington architectural establishment, Arthur Cotton Moore, imagined a grand staircase linking the Kennedy Center terraces to the waterfront. And more recently, in 2003, renowned architect Rafael Viñoly included river connections in his conceptual designs for an expansion of the center.

Finally, the long-elusive link to the river is poised to become a reality. Again, the lead architect on this project is **KGP Design Studio's Don Paine**. The KGP plan calls for a pair of steel-and-glass staircases to sweep from the Kennedy Center's River Terrace, over Rock Creek Parkway, and down 32 feet to the river. The descent is slowed along the way with terraced landings that will offer spectacular views out over the water. Two glass elevators provide additional access and, in a minimalist flourish, form the sole support for the staircases. The stair treads will be fabricated in tempered, non-slip glass and supported by perforated steel risers. Dramatic night lighting will make descending or ascending by either stairs or elevators a theatrical experience.

The stairs will terminate at a landscaped plaza at the new ground level on the Rock Creek Parkway Trail. A 30-inch-high granite retaining wall separating the parkway from the plaza will protect visitors from automobile traffic and noise. Within the plaza, a grid of cherry trees will provide a luxuriant canopy of foliage and blooms that echo the visitor experience at the Tidal Basin. A continuous granite seating bench will wrap the plaza, generous planting beds will punctuate the granite paving, and nighttime uplighting will enliven the public space.

Ramps adjacent to the plaza retaining wall will provide access to the elevators. As the cherry trees on the plaza mature, they will surround the stairs and elevators and help integrate the structures with the landscape. Glass guardrails at the water's edge will give a sense of security while continuing a design aesthetic of ephemeral lightness, transparency, and drama.

"There has always been so much support for making this connection," said Paine. "It is clearly the right thing to do." The architect believes that once the stair project, scheduled to start construction in 2011, and improved waterfront promenade are complete, people will realize how easy it is to move between Georgetown, the Kennedy Center, and the National Mall. 



Nighttime rendering of the steps that will connect the Kennedy Center to the Potomac Riverfront. Courtesy of KGP Design Studio



Close-up rendering of one staircase. Courtesy of KGP Design Studio



Rendering of the tree-lined walkway at the base of the new steps. Courtesy of KGP Design Studio

Project: Kennedy Center Access

Architects:

KGP Design Studio; Washington, DC

Engineers (schematic design phase):

McMullan and Associates

Engineers/Project Managers:

Parsons Brinckerhoff



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